From the Desk of the Canadian Athletic Director: Perceptions of Core Competencies in Ontario University Athletics (OUA)

Tyler Harrison, BSM (Honours)

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Health Sciences
(Sport Management)

Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

Dedication

This research is dedicated to all those who are passionate about inter-university sport. As a student-athlete during my time at Brock University (2010-2014), I also engaged in many opportunities working in collaboration with the Brock University athletic and recreation department, and multiple and valuable NCAA volunteer experiences. It is from these experiences that I developed a strong passion for inter-university sport and the people that make it all happen. This passion is what ignited my interest in this research. For those who share the dream of continuing to work and develop this form of amateur sport, I hope this research contributes a greater perspective.

A special dedication must be made to my parents Ian and Maureen and my brother Troy who provided support throughout my Master's research journey. Your ongoing support has been extremely helpful and I don't know what I would have done without you both. The love, gratitude, and generosity that you continually share are 'core competencies' that I hope I can share in relationships and work I take on in the future. Whether it was a late night pep talk or reviewing countless rough drafts, I wouldn't have been able to accomplish this academic endeavour without you both. Love you forever!

Abstract

Intercollegiate athletics are a unique and integral part of North American institutions of higher education. Through competition and achievement, intercollegiate sport in both U SPORTS and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is valuable to their member institutions. As a result, investment of time, energy, financial, and human resources are necessary within athletic departments. Given the Athletic Director (AD) is positioned as one of these resources (human), the purpose of this study is to understand the core competencies needed of OUA athletic directors to best perform in their role within inter-university athletics in Canada. Competencies are classified as, "clusters of skills, knowledge, abilities and behaviours required for job success" (Bernthal, et al, 2004, p.13).

To explore, the current study conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with Ontario University Athletic (OUA) Athletic Directors. Findings indicated there are four overarching management categories: Strategic Oversight Management, Human Resource Management, Financial Management, and Marketing Management while Athletic Directors perceived core competencies are discussed under these categories. As well, an OUA Athletic Director Competency Model is presented that clearly described the research findings. The perceptions of Athletic Directors are further discussed relating findings to previous literature while both practical and academic implications and directions for myriad of future research opportunities are outlined given the paucity of research.

Keywords: Resource-Based View, Competencies, Intercollegiate Athletics, U SPORTS, Athletic Directors

Acknowledgements

To begin I would like to acknowledge Dr. Chris Chard. Your passion for inter-university sport was an obvious fit and I couldn't have been happier to work with anyone else. Your consistent effort to provide feedback while not holding my hand was greatly appreciated and I know it made me feel like this finished document was an important work I am very proud of. At times I might have shown strong frustration towards the process, but I knew that in the end I had to trust you and your experience. Looking back at my graduate journey, it was a lot of three steps forward, two steps backward, but I know I could always count on your guidance. Here's hoping we can continue to increase the awareness of Canadian inter-university sport and grow the knowledge in the future.

To my committee members, Dr. Kirsty Spence and Dr. Luke Potwarka, I would like to thank you for your support throughout the research process. Your insight always provided new perspective on how I looked at my own research, and always challenged the theoretical, methodological, and critical thought I presented. Sometimes being so engrained in your own work you oversee clear gaps, and can't see the forest through the trees. Your guidance at the most crucial times allowed me to navigate and find the true meaning of my work. I would also like to thank Dr. Joanne MacLean for accepting the external examiner role and developing my thesis further. Your generosity to support this document with your personal knowledge was greatly appreciated!

Brock University's Department of Sport Management (SPMA): Without the other members of Brock University's SPMA Department, I wouldn't have even pursued graduate school. Building upon the knowledge gained in the four years of undergraduate, even though you may not think so, you were inadvertently involved in the creation of this research. Picking up nuggets of knowledge might have helped me in each class, but the overall impact it had on my desire to learn further was something you all provided me.

Brock Sports Staff: During the past couple of years the opportunities I have had within Brock to share my passion of inter-university sport has been supported by all of you. Whether it was just a casual conversation by the Walker Complex Welcome Desk, or catching up on the latest Badger scores; Neil, Chris, Sandie, Shawn, Jesse, and all the Badger Coaches, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. More specifically I would like to thank Robert Hilson for your mentorship that stretches well past just these past couple years. Your generosity and always having your door open no matter what time of day truly showed the care you had for me as a student. Even when times were tough you enlightened my view and kept me pushing on.

My SPMA Graduate Family...

Evan - Who would've thought that the 2015 August ISW would lead to two plus years of great times and experiences. Always enjoyed those high intensity early morning workouts or taking time to look internal and be Yogis. One thing that I've taken from you is your great ability to see positivity in everyone and share your critical perspective when needed. As well, I applaud you for successfully completing insightful work that I hope can elicit change in the sporting industry!

Cole - It has truly been a wonderful two years getting to know you. From the first HR project that we worked on for 5P08, I knew that our drive for research would bring us even closer. After hundreds of coffees, WODS, and our classic morning breakfasts, you have become a great friend and I'm truly grateful for this. I look forward to seeing how your research unfolds and how you integrate research into a career!

Lindsay - It all began when you didn't even show up for the first two weeks of first year when "apparently" you were off in some foreign land saving the day or managing the Olympics, or was it the Commonwealth games? Anyway, our friendship has definitely evolved and grown closer throughout the past couple seasons of grad school. Your compassion and tenacity is infectious, and I thank you for always being there for me in

times when the guys didn't cut it. I'm intrigued to see where your research takes you and your future career aspirations. Maybe the 2021 Canada games will bring you back to St. Catharines and we can all work together!

Mitch - Ohh Shaggy. Another of the core members of our conglomerate, I enjoyed every moment that we had together. I could always count on you for critical research advice and also putting up the jumper to win a pickup game of basketball. I also want to congratulate you formally on completing your research abroad in Swaziland on sport for development. As you begin your PHD at York, I wish you the best of luck but remember that you're a Badger for life ... not a Lion.

Coach Matt - To the man who did practice plans in 5P01 with tiny golf pencils, I cannot thank you enough for your help. As you shared my love for Brock Athletics I always loved chatting with you about what was going on. One thing I enjoyed was your devotion to your coaching, academics and then your hard work as a student-athlete. I'm sure it was tough balancing everything but you're better off for those experiences now. Congratulations on completing your research as well as your new business venture. You will always be a great friend and will continue to challenge me in my own endeavours.

Other SPMA grad students, friends, and colleagues - For those who I haven't mentioned by name but have been involved during my graduate school experience, I also thank you. Whether our relationship was rooted well before grad school or new acquaintances met during, everyone had an impact on where I stand today. Graduate school is not only about the research project but also learning more about yourself personally, and through the highs and lows you all were there for me! In essence the authors of this thesis go well beyond what is shown on the cover. Thank you all very much!

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Intercollegiate athletics are a unique and integral component of North American institutions of higher education. Working in close alignment with the objectives of the institution, intercollegiate athletics contributes to the students, employees, and the communities' experience. While intercollegiate athletics was originally developed to provide students with an opportunity to maximally develop, it has grown beyond serving educational goals of the institution.

As competition and achievement have been engulfed in the cultural fabric of Western society (Geiger, 2013), intercollegiate athletics has changed. Through competition on the field of play and additional achievement (i.e., championship success and student-athlete recognition), post-secondary athletics in University Sports Canada (U SPORTS) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) have been valuable to their member institutions. Here, investment of time, energy, financial, and human resources has been made within athletic and recreation departments. Geiger (2013) comments that intercollegiate athletics has;

> "become [a] developmental platform[s] for amateur international competition and professional sports leagues, and to varying degrees, serve[s] as a source of institutional revenue and entertainment, as well as sources of pride, affiliation, tradition, and inspiration to many people both within and outside of college and university communities" (p. 1).

Intercollegiate Athletics in North America

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a membership-driven organization that manages intercollegiate sport in the United States. Comprised of more

than 460,000 student-athletes from 1,121 member institutions, these student-athletes compete on 19,000 teams; across three divisions (i.e. Division I, Division II, Division III), approximately 54,000 participants compete each year in the NCAA's 90 championships in 24 sports (NCAA, 2016).

Comprised of 56 member institutions, U SPORTS is the governing body of university sport in Canada. It is important to note that while this research was being conducted, Canadian Inter-university Sport (CIS) rebranded in November 2016, to U SPORTS. Its members are grouped within four associations across the country, including the Canada West Universities Athletic Association (CWUAA), Ontario University Athletics (OUA), Réseau du sport étudiant du Quebec (RSEQ), and Atlantic University Sport (AUS). Approximately 11,920 student-athletes compete in U SPORTS annually and fewer compete in 21 national championships in 12 sports (CIS, 2012).

Quite like the NCAA, U SPORTS can provide an intermediate sports competition opportunity as a student transitions from a high school, and for local club level sports context to the Olympic and or professional context (CIS, 2012). Many high-performance athletes use U SPORTS facilities to train in world-class training facilities (CIS, 2012). Moreover, highly qualified coaches, who often also work within the national coaching system, coach/work with student-athletes (CIS, 2012).

One conference within U SPORTS is Ontario University Athletics (OUA). As stated in their strategic plan, the OUA is:

> "... the largest inter-university conference within Canada, [and] the history of the OUA and its members dates back to 1906 and has evolved over time to reflect a robust and diverse sport environment that enhances the co-curricular learning environment for Ontario student-athletes" (OUA, 2014, p. 2).

The OUA is comprised of 20 member institutions across Ontario. Approximately 9,000 student-athletes (including additional non-governing U SPORTS' sports) participate and compete in 23 sports and 40 provincial championships (OUA, 2014). Similar to U SPORTS, OUA administrators have a vision of maintaining student-athletes' development through academics and athletics to foster excellence in life (OUA, 2014). Athletics administrators from member institutions share the same developmental goals in academic, athletic, and community leadership spheres (OUA, 2014). See Appendix D, which showcases the 20 Ontario University Athletics member institutions.

In the United States, revenues among leading National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I athletic departments for the 2014–2015 academic school year included the University of Texas ($179.6 million US) and the Ohio State University ($170.9 million US) (Solomon, 2015). From such revenue, these particular athletic departments have the necessary financial support to hire specialized firms and employees to administer selected aspects of their organization, for example, graphic designers or a social media manager. As such, many NCAA institutions are heavily advantaged compared to Canadian institutions related to financial and human resource support.

While NCAA institutions may be more heavily resourced, the 56 U SPORTS institutions and their athletic departments still maintain substantial operating budgets. For example, Brock University, a U SPORTS/OUA member institution located in St. Catharines, Ontario has accounted revenue for the athletics and recreation department approximating $4.8 million, according to the institution's 2015–16 budget report (Brock University, 2016). This department provides programming for nearly 20,000 students,

staff, faculty, and community members (Brock University, 2016). Thus, the revenue generated by institutions and their athletic and recreation departments is a financial strength that must be effectively managed. U SPORTS parallels NCAA operations related to Division II institutions, where administrators strive for balancing academic, athletes' athletic and social opportunities (Miller & Kerr, 2002).

Danylchuk and MacLean (2001) note U SPORTS, as an exemplary form of amateur athletics, given it is non-profit oriented and focused on providing opportunities for student-athlete participants. Also, U SPORTS administrators emphasize amateurism, given the U SPORTS vision as "inspir[ing] Canada's next generation of leaders through excellence in sport and academics" (CIS, 2012, p. 10). Thus, in order for any U SPORTS institution to achieve excellence in sport and academia, their athletic administrators must manage their resources wisely.

Within the U SPORTS context, the athletic and recreation departments of member institutions possess a myriad of resources. In an environment of institutional diversity, understanding how these institutions and their athletic departments operate should be explored. Danlychuk and MacLean (2001) have addressed issues such as institutional diversity, governance, funding, the role and value of inter-university athletics, and the changing environmental context of the Canadian university. Within the U SPORTS context, these issues must be addressed and understood to a further degree. Specifically, governance of these athletic departments relates to this research.

Individuals embedded within the specific U SPORTS member institutions are key members who have competencies for management of their departments. Specifically,

departmental directors, managers, and coordinators all provide substantial value to their institution. Whether it is the director who may be responsible for final decisions on the departments behalf, a manager who oversees the operations of the athletic and recreation facilities, the coordinator planning intramurals or even full time and student staff, every employee (human resource) hired must work toward a defined purpose. In the past 15 (or more) years threats to the funding of university sport, have increased pressure on these departments to prove their worth on campus (Danlychuk & MacLean, 2001). Even though these departments operate with significant budgets, it is imperative that those individuals who may work to lead these departments have the acumen to continue to vouch for what intercollegiate athletics and recreations provide the institution.

Given the Athletic Director is organizationally positioned as the leader of the department's hierarchical structure, he or she occupies an integral position of authority and decision-making. It is therefore important to explore the ADs in terms of competencies for strategic management of athletic departments. This means generating an understanding around what an AD may require in terms of knowledge, skills, experiences, to exert a level of competence in their role.

The term competency has been explored from multiple perspectives. Boyatzis (1982) describes competencies as one's behavioural characteristics that have a causal effect on superior performance on the job, while Fletcher (1991) defines competence, as the ability to perform an activity within the occupation to a prescribed standard based upon the specific context (i.e., the job or organizational environment). As well, the idea of core competence or competencies provides organizations and/or resources such as

human capital a competitive advantage over their competitors (Horton, 2002). These terms will be clarified further for your understanding in the literature review in Chapter II.

Over the past 30 years, an abundance of literature connects competency exploration with the NCAA. For example, Cash (1983) studied the development of a competency-based model for individuals in athletic administration, while Parker (1986) focused solely on NCAA Division I Athletic Directors and Quarterman (1994) studied athletic conference Commissioners. Researchers have also drawn comparisons between athletic directors and sport managers (Hatfield, Wrenn, & Bretting, 1987; Williams & Miller, 1983) and between athletic directors and divisions (Neilson, 1989). Finally, literature exists around career progression in athletic administration (Won, Bravo, and Lee, 2012; Hardin, Cooper, Huffman, 2013).

While this research exists, the literature on U SPORTS, and specifically research on competency development within this context is scarce. Literature that does exist on the U SPORTS context includes internal and external influences around inter-university athletics (Inglis, 1991) and perceived environmental control (Armstrong-Doherty, 1995). As well, Danylchuk and MacLean (2001) spoke about the future perspective of Canadian university sport, while more recently, Aughey, Danylchuk, and Lebel (2011) researched the impact of the economic recession on CIS programs. More recently multiple studies conducted by Chard (2013), Chard, MacLean, & Faught (2013), and Chard & Potwarka, 2017), examined brand and decision-making in U SPORTS. Considering the paucity of

research, Danylchuk and Chelladurai's (1999) study represents the only relatable research to the current study based upon the Canadian context.

Given the gap in the literature on competencies of U SPORTS athletic administration, it is worthy to focus more research attention on the Canadian context of inter-university athletics. Specifically, the researcher was interested in the competencies that the AD has within their role in the athletic department and the institution. Williams and Miller (1983) state "the field of athletics has experienced rapid growth and change, underscoring the need for updating knowledge about effective administration of these programs" (p. 398). While Williams and Miller (1983) made this statement over 30 years ago, it remains valid today. Given change in U SPORTS is ongoing, the enhancement of knowledge and understanding of ADs' competencies is worthy research.

Significance of the Study

Collins (2001) describes why he thinks the resource-based view (RBV) plays an integral role in human resource management practices. The RBV is defined, as having diversification of resources is fundamental to superior firm performance and serves as a potential source of competitive advantage (Wernerfelt (1984). As such, a modification to Collins' (2001) adage "people are your most important asset" could be the right people are those who have the right competencies. Moreover, in his examination of business, Collins (2001) and his research team expected that leaders of great companies would begin by setting a new vision and strategy. Instead, metaphorically speaking, Collins (2001) found that such leaders first got the right people on a bus (the organization), the wrong people off the same bus (by firing), and the right people in the right seats of the

bus (specific positions in the organization), after which time they would figure out where to drive the bus (the goals of the organization/ strategic management).

As previous knowledge of athletic administration has been gathered using quantitative research methodology (Cash, 1983; Williams & Miller, 1983; Parker, 1986; Hatfield, Wrenn & Bretting, 1987; Neilson, 1989; Quarterman, 1994; Smart & Wolfe, 2000; Won, Bravo & Lee, 2012; Hardin, Cooper & Huffman, 2013), this study will build upon the existing literature and will strengthen the Canadian intercollegiate managerial context by following qualitative research methodology which is described further in Chapter VI. Given that it has been 18 years since Danylchuk and Chelladurai (1999) presented one of the only Canadian studies relative to Athletic Directors' competencies, both researchers and practitioners alike will benefit from updated research, specifically regarding core competencies Athletic Directors require in Canada.

Statement of Purpose & Research Question

The purpose of this research has been to understand the core competencies needed of OUA athletic directors to best perform in their role within inter-university athletics in Canada. As the majority of existing literature in intercollegiate athletics focuses on the NCAA, research on the core competencies necessary for ADs within the U SPORTS context represents a positive opportunity. Furthermore, studying this topic from a qualitative research design and associated methodologies contributes to existing literature. As such, the following research question was explored in this study:

1. *What are the relevant core competencies an OUA Athletic Director requires to effectively perform in his or her position?*

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has identified the following assumptions, including: first, individuals occupying the position of inter-university Athletic Director are the appropriate individuals from which to identify required competencies for this specific position. Second, human resource (HR) administrators of the relevant university institutions have developed job advertisements, which have been approved by the university President. Therefore, it is assumed that the university HR administrators instead of the ADs themselves may predetermine the competencies that AD's require described within the posted job advertisements. Third, the researcher assumed that athletic directors would work on a myriad of other responsibilities that have not been explicitly outlined in the posted job advertisement. As such, the researcher expected that an understanding of these extraneous responsibilities would emerge in these data. Finally, the researcher assumed a disconnect may emerge between competencies explicitly advertised within a job advertisement and the competencies the AD perceives he or she needs to enact the job. Knowing these assumptions a priori helped the researcher while collecting and analyzing these data from research participants.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Given the researcher's pragmatic view, he's able to conduct the research in a flexible manner (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). However, an understanding of theoretical and conceptual frameworks has been used to provide structure to the research study. Therefore the researcher was able to discover/understand a phenomenon, a process of the perspective/worldviews of people involved; drawing upon the most practical methods

available to answer the given research; providing information that can inform practice; While maintaining a balance of description and interpretation. As well, according to pragmatism, the researcher will always provide a rationale for the choices he makes with regard to data collection and data analysis (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

The resource-based view (RBV), a strategic management theory will assist the researcher's understanding when carrying out this study's purpose. About RBV, Wernerfelt (1984) stipulates that resources are key to superior firm performance and serve as a potential source of competitive advantage. Here, the AD is classified under what Barney (1991) calls human capital, which is one of three categories of resources available to an organization. The researcher involved in this study analyzed the AD as one of these resources and discussed the competencies necessary for ADs at his or her institutions.

In today's competitive business environment, Gangani, McLean, and Braden (2006) assert that the use of competency models may help improve human resource management strategy such that, "by applying a systematic framework to evaluate employee competencies, an organization may be able to build an ongoing snapshot of the overall knowledge and skills portfolio of its workforce" (p. 127). As competencies are becoming a crucial building element for the success of all businesses, competency-based models (CBM) allow corporations to create and sustain competitive advantage in business. These models help to benefit a company and add value that strengthens their competitive position (Misun, 2013).

Reflexivity

From the researcher's involvement within a middle-sized university in southern Ontario, he has seen a shift from hiring ADs who had previous coaching experience to now hiring ADs who have substantial business experience. The researcher's observations are commensurate with Wong's (2014) noting that "when looking at recent hires of ADs, there is some support for the theory that college athletics is more businesslike and that the individuals hired as ADs have the experience, skills and/or education to manage today's athletic departments" (p. 32).

Given the researcher's previous work/playing experience in U SPORTS, OUA, and the NCAA, he believes this area needed further research attention in Canada. The researcher's involvement allowed him to gain an appreciation for how integral an athletic department is to a post-secondary institution. Given the large operating budgets of U SPORTS member institutions, it is imperative that these sport managers have the necessary competencies to operate these athletic departments.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

First, through a description of the RBV of strategic management, an overall understanding of the physical, organization and human capital resources that go into the firm and what value each of them holds in the dynamic of the organization is provided (Wernerfelt, 1984). Second, competency-based analysis will be explained, and is beneficial to provide a specific person or role an identity that drives organizational change. Finally, the nature of managerial work is reviewed within the business and sporting industries to see what competencies are required and valued.

Resource-Based View (RBV) of Strategic Management

In terms of this study, RBV aided in the researcher in gaining more knowledge behind resources of a firm and how a firm can optimize the use of its own resources. Wernerfelt (1984), states that having diversification of resources is fundamental to superior firm performance and serves as a potential source of competitive advantage. Caves (1980) defines a firm's resources as those tangible and intangible assets or skills that are semi-permanently attached to the firm at any given time. Barney (1991) contributes to Daft's (1983) definition by stating that a "firm's resources include all assets, capabilities, organization processes, firm attributes, info, knowledge, etc. controlled by a firm that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness" (p. 101).

Barney (1991) then describes the diversity of resources must be distributed across firms in an industry. What Barney describes suggests that not all firms will have the same

resources. One firm may have stronger organizational resources while another may provide their strength in human capital resources. As well, empirical indicators (e.g., value, rareness, imitability, and sustainability) must be analyzed in order to gather a greater understanding of the value of these resources to their firms.

Furthermore, it is important to understand the three categories of resources described by Barney (1991). These three categories of resources include: physical resources (Williamson, 1975), organizational resources (Barney, 1991; Tomer, 1987), and human capital (Becker, 1964). Physical resources are assets such as facilities, equipment, geographic location, and access to raw material (Barney, 1991). Organizational resources are a firm's reporting structure, formal and informal planning, controlling, coordinating system, and informal relations within internal groups of a firm and those in the environment (Barney, 1991). Finally, human capital resources include "the training, experience, judgment, intelligence, relationships, and insight of individual managers and workers in the firm" (Barney, 1991, p. 101).

After identifying these categories of resources, the researcher can further analyze specific resources. Gathering knowledge of the competencies these resources require enables firms to better understand how they can gain competitive advantage. For example, Peteraf, (1993) discusses how a Nobel Prize-winning scientist may be a rare resource, but unless he fits within the dynamic of the other workers or the culture of the firm, he may not be a source of competitive and/or sustained advantage. In the following section, an overview of how competitive and sustained competitive advantages is presented.

Having the ability to implement a strategy that is not being executed by any current or potential competitor may lead to a sense of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). However, generating competitive advantage is not as simple as having the right resources and a strategy in place (Barney, 1991). The researcher agrees with Barney (1991) stating resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and not substitutable for a firm may enhance sustained competitive advantage. The ability of firms to strategically manage and systematically gain a sustained competitive advantage should not be based exclusively on having more resources. Having a particular mixture of resources could be required in some strategies (Barney, 1991). Hambrick (1987) also acknowledges managerial talent as a resource required in proper implementation of strategy. Within sport management literature, researchers (Amis, Pant, & Slack, 1997; Berman, Down, & Hill, 2002; Smart & Wolfe, 2000) have used the RBV to measure attributes that could lead toward potential performance benefits in sport sponsorship, professional sport, and intercollegiate sport.

Given the complex social implications of human capital as a resource, the researcher must take great care in exploring this resource. Examples include the interpersonal relations among managers within the firm environment (Hambrick, 1987), a firm's culture (Barney, 1986), and a firm's reputation among suppliers (Porter, 1980) and customers (Klein, Crawford, & Alchian, 1978; Klein & Leffler, 1981). As well, an appreciation for how firms develop and protect their competitive position is logical. Thus, the internal context of the firm is key rather than using previous structural approaches

that focus on the external environment that a firm has no strategic control over (Gerrad, 2003).

Competency-Based Analysis

Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) have provided insight into how the use of competency-based models improves human resource management strategy and is a significant driver of organizational change. Beginning in the 1970s and into the 1980s, American academics turned toward a focus on strategic management as the key to competitive success (Horton, 2000). McClelland (1973) seminally argued that the traditional examinations were no longer the best predictor of job performance, and there were other ways for competency to predict success. These traditional examinations included standardization of occupational competence.

Even though there may be commonalities across organizations, context is integral (Boyatzis, 1982), providing a link between specific managerial positions, specific companies, and specific types of business (Misun, 2013). Therefore, engaging in an ongoing analysis is essential for companies to stay ahead of competitors.

Competencies have been defined differently throughout the literature. Quite simply, Bernthal, Colteryahn, Davis, Naughton, Rothwell, and Wellins (2004) state that competencies are "the clusters of skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviours required for job success" (p. 13). Numerous others have provided similar definitions of competencies (Boyatzis, 1982; Flieshman, Wetrogen, Uhlman, & Marshall-Mies, 1995; Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Mirabile, 1997; Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Guion, 1991; Misun, 2013). Further, distinction must be made between competency (ies) referred to by Boyatzis

(1982) as behavioural characteristics that have a causal effect on superior performance on the job, and competence(s), which is defined by Fletcher (1991) as the ability to perform an activity within the occupation to a prescribed standard. These terms must be carefully distinguished because they refer to separate foci. While the focus of the former (competency(ies)) is on the inputs that lead to successful job performance, the focus of the latter (competence(s)) is on the outcomes of the competencies.

Horton (2002) also describes different approaches to developing competency frameworks. First, the competency management approach identifies specific competencies required to perform a job well, while the traditional approach tends to emphasize the person's formal qualifications and experiences as indicators of likelihood of performance.

A competency framework is a list of competencies, used as a tool where competencies can be expressed, assessed, and measured for value (Strebler, Robinson, & Heron, 1997). Two models generally have been used as the basis for competency frameworks. The American behavioral model, expresses competencies as the behaviors that individuals have demonstrated to show competency, while the British 'minimum standards of competent performance' model relates to an individual's ability within an occupation to perform an activity to the prescribed standard (Fletcher, 1997). Academics, practitioners, and readers alike must indicate the significant differences and foci, specifically, "(person versus job), the level of performance (competent versus effective or superior) and the object (role or organization)" (Horton, 2002, p. 5). Making sure clarification of these terms is important for academics, practitioners, and readers.

The idea of "core competence" is also important to consider. Thinking about strategic management over the last decade has included discussion on core competencies, related to how they give an organization an edge over competitors (Horton, 2002). Core competencies relate to the essential competencies particular to carrying out the job/position rather than secondary/tertiary competencies. In an organization, however, the integration of the collective tacit and explicit knowledge, skills, and techniques that an organization has, can be their core competence. Examples of organizational core competencies include market access, integrity-related, and functionally related competencies. It is the core competence or competencies that give organizations and/or resources such as human capital the competitive advantage (Horton, 2002).

As competencies in general are acknowledged as a crucial building block for business success, competency-based models (CBM) allow organizational leaders to create and sustain competitive business advantage. As well, leaders who use CBMs look at human capital as the key source of success and failure (Horton, 2002). According to Gangani, McLean, and Braden (2006), "by applying a systematic framework to evaluate employee competencies, an organization may be able to build an ongoing snapshot of the overall knowledge and skills portfolio of its workforce" (p. 127). These models help bring an organization benefit and added value that strengthens their competitive position (Misun, 2013).

Boyatzis (1982) focused on clusters of competencies, whereby he distinctly outlined classifications of competence. These clusters grouped competencies that had similar characteristics. As seen in Table 2, Boyatzis' competency framework focuses on

what managers *can do* and *how they do things*, emphasizing how they behave rather than what skills and knowledge they possess. The four clusters include: 1) goal and action management; 2) human resource management; 3) leadership; and, 4) focus on others.

Table 1: Boyatzis (1982) Competency Model

<table>
<tr><td>Goal and Action Management Cluster</td><td>Human Resource Management Cluster</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Concerned with impact: being concerned with symbols of power impacting others. Concerned about status and reputation.
• Diagnostic use of concepts: identifying and recognizing patterns from an assortment of information by bringing a concept to the situation and attempting to interpret events through the use of the concept.
• Efficiency orientation: being concerned with doing something better.
• Proactivity: being disposed to take action to achieve something.</td><td>• Concerned with use of socialized power: ability to use influence to build alliances, networks, coalitions, and teams.
• Managing group process: stimulating others to work effectively in groups.
• Accurate self-assessment: seeing personal strengths and weaknesses and knowing one’s own limitations (threshold competency).
• Positive regard: believing in others, being optimistic, and valuing others.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Leadership Cluster</td><td>Focus on Others Cluster</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">• Conceptualization: the ability to construct concepts from data and information.
• Self-confidence: having presence and being decisive. Knowing what you are doing, believing in it and doing it well.
• Oratorical skills: making articulate and well-communicated presentations to large and small groups.
• Logical thought: placing events in causal sequences and being orderly and systematic (threshold competency).</td><td>• Perceptual objectivity: avoiding bias or prejudice.
• Self-control: being able to subordinate self-interest in the interest of the organization.
• Stamina and adaptability: being able to maintain energy and commitment and showing flexibility and orientation to change.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Directing Subordinates Cluster</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Threshold competencies of developing others, spontaneity, and use of unilateral power.</td></tr>
</table>

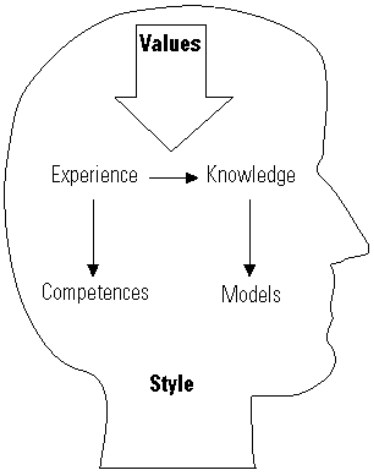
The resource-based view (RBV) focuses on the internal environment that explains why a firm may pursue one strategy over another. As Barney (1991) suggested, a firm’s resources are competitively important only to the extent that they are valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate. The following section will outline how the RBV can be examined related to managerial work.

Managerial Work

Mintzberg (1994) developed a "well rounded" conceptual model that integrated the job of managing based on three interacting and concentric circles related to: 1) *the person in the job; 2) the frame of the job*; and, 3) *the agenda of work*. Utilizing Mintzberg's (1994) model is "beneficial for understanding the manager's job from the core, building upon it layer by layer" (p. 12). In the following sections, the three concentric circles are discussed further.

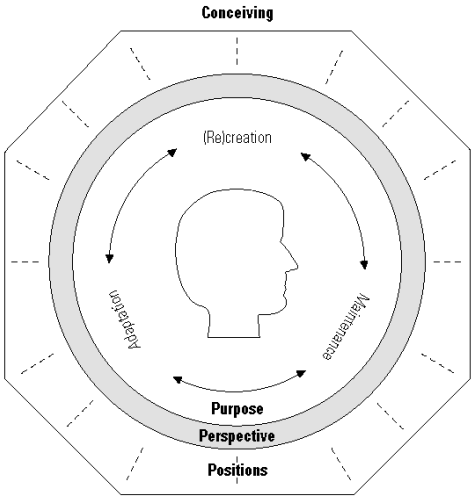
The person in the job. Mintzberg (1994) clearly outlines how an individual comes into a managerial position with his or her own personal pre-established values and experiences. As such, people beginning a new managerial position are not beginning as a neutral resource. Over time, individuals' values and experiences give them a set of skills or competencies based on their own knowledge. From this knowledge, individuals create their own interpretation of the world around them, which leads to the development of a set of mental models.

Figure 1. The person in the job (Mintzberg, 1994)



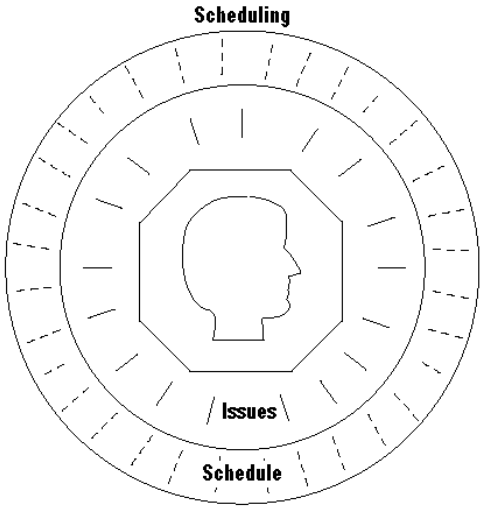
The frame of the job. After understanding the person in the job, it is necessary to then understand the framework he or she will carry out while working in the job. In Mintzberg's (1994) model, three increasingly specific components radiate from the individual, which are purpose, perspective, and positions as seen in Figure 3. Purpose deals with what the manager is supposed to do with the business unit for which they are responsible. These managers must think of their unit as an extension of themselves and create, maintain, adapt, or recreate their unit. The next two circles of the frame build upon strategy and structure. Second, building a vision and culture around how the individual and the unit operates and their approach (i.e., Strategy for the Department/Organization) is known as the perspective. Positions discuss the concrete structure by which the work is carried out (i.e., Managerial position vs. part-time student staff).

Figure 2. The frame of the job (Mintzberg, 1994)



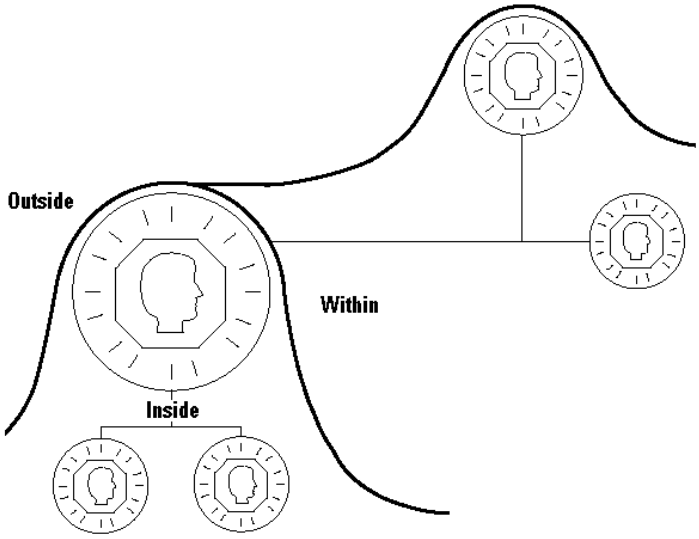
The agenda of work. After looking at the core of a particular managerial job in the frame of the individual's choice, the manager works on specific activities, as manifested through the agenda (Mintzberg, 1994). In Figure 4, the concentric circles visually delineate general current issues from a more tangible schedule (Mintzberg, 1994). To clarify those current issues are those that the managers deem as concerns or those things "on the plate". These in effect determine a tangible schedule whereby the manager and staff can work through these issues. The manager's prioritization of issues is a key aspect of scheduling as well as a contributor to managerial time (Mintzberg, 1994). Managerial time could be based on day-to-day activities or long-term projects.

Figure 3. The agenda of work (Mintzberg, 1994)



The core in context. Depicted in Figure 5, the lines surrounding the core separate authority from other members within an organization or department (Mintzberg, 1994). The manager has formal authority over his or her organizational unit, whether it is an entire organization or a department, and therefore three divisions have been created. As labelled, "Inside" refers to the core location, in which the manager has authority and includes core staff and activities (i.e., the hospital ward in the case of a head nurse). "Within" refers to those who also work within the organization and who may be associated with alternate units, apart from the core (i.e., doctors, the kitchen, and the physiotherapist in the rest of the hospital). The managers do not have any formal authority over these "Within" units. Lastly, "Outside" refers to any additional parts (e.g. patients' relatives, long-term care institutions to which some patients are discharged, and nursing associations) that are not formally bound by the organization.

Figure 4. The core in context (Mintzberg, 1994)



In the following section, a specific competency-based analysis regarding athletic directors and the nature of their managerial work is detailed.

Athletic Administration Competency-Based Analysis

While literature conducted on the NCAA may not be transferable to U SPORTS, it is important to share what has already been contributed to exploring competencies of athletic administration. Over the past 30 years, scholars have analyzed athletic directors and staff of intercollegiate athletic departments from across the NCAA (Cash, 1983; Williams & Miller, 1983; Parker, 1986; Hatfield, Wrenn, and Bretting, 1987; Neilson, 1989; Quarterman, 1994; Smart & Wolfe, 2000; Won, Bravo, and Lee, 2012; Hardin, Cooper, Huffman, 2013) using quantitative approaches. Christian (2000) however, collected detailed responses through in-person interviews with athletic directors and analyzed their personal thoughts for further meaning.

Cash (1983) started studying the development of the competency-based inventory that was a list of competencies that were important for effective function in athletic administration. For those individuals in athletic administration, it is important to focus on acquiring and developing skills essential for their desired position. Recognizing that the athletic director's position itself has undergone significant changes in what is required in acumen, there is an increasing need to identify and update current competencies deemed relevant in athletic administration (Williams & Miller, 1983).

The organization of knowledge and skills is crucial for competency-based analyses. Through organization the creation of a competency-based inventory framework can be built and analyzed. In an effort to structure competencies, Cash (1983) derived the following categories, including: Management of Personnel, Management of Business and Finance, Management of Communication, Management of Personnel/Professional Development, Management of Student-Athlete Services, and Management of Physical Facilities. Nielson (1989) further grouped competencies under the categories of Business, Communication, Facility Supervision, Personnel, Athletic, and Administration. Finally, Hatfield, Wrenn, and Bretting (1987) grouped competencies conceptually into six major areas, including: Labour Relations, Marketing, Financial Management, Administration, Personnel Evaluation, and Public Relations. Justification of these categories of competencies are based upon the author's own understanding and within the study being conducted. The researcher in this study provides his own justification of the categories of competency he decides to explore.

The utilization of quantitative research methodology to study athletic administration competency has been a predominant trend. However, a lack of empirical data exists regarding the prerequisite skills that potential sport administrators should obtain for effective job performance (Ulrich and Parkhouse, 1979). In this study, researchers have asked those experts who are sitting in the position of AD about their competencies. Praztner (1979) states, "the most appropriate sources of information for performance-based occupational preparation are the job itself and those closest to and most knowledgeable about the performance requirements on the job" (p. 31). Since ADs represent a purposive sample of the highest level of executives in sport administration within an intercollegiate athletics department, it is beneficial to know what competencies they require.

Through questionnaire modifications (Cash, 1983) and surveys (Hatfield et al., 1987; Nielson, 1989; Skipper, 1990; Toh, 1997; Danylchuk & Chelladurai, 1999) researchers have compared athletic directors and sport managers. Hatfield et al. (1987) gained an understanding of the perceived importance of job responsibilities, demographic information, and educational recommendations for Division I university ADs and Chief Executive Officers. In particular, the second section of Hatfield et al.'s (1987) study contained competency items based upon previous reports (Bretting, 1983; Parkhouse, 1978; Ulrich & Parkhouse, 1982; Williams & Miller, 1983; Youngberg, 1971) that described the AD role. As well, Hatfield et al. (1987) solicited additional relevant competencies from expert practitioners in sport management, such that a significant relationship existed between the question regarding participation in collegiate or

professional sport and previous positions held by the respondents including those in the position of head coach (70.7%), assistant AD (48.5), professor (36.8%), associate AD (29.3%), and business manager (19.0%).

Neilson (1989) sought to determine whether any significant differences existed between athletic directors representative of the three NCAA divisions (i.e., Division I, Division II, and Division III) with regard to the AD's own perceptions of competencies. Lambrecht (1987) modified the "Athletic Club Managers Survey" (1987) to include the descriptions and ratings of 46 competency statements to allow for successful responses from athletic administration. Lambrecht (1987) found no significant differences existing between the three NCAA divisions in terms of the competencies required for athletic administration. Meaning that a factor that may have an influence on the athletic department does not effect the perceptions of athletic administration and required competence.

U SPORTS and Canadian Literature. Literature on the U SPORTS context includes internal and external influence around inter-university athletics (Inglis, 1991) and perceived environmental control (Armstrong-Doherty, 1995). As well, Danylchuk and MacLean (2001) examined the future perspective of Canadian university sport, while more recently, Aughey, Danylchuk, and Lebel (2011) researched the impact of the economic recession on U SPORTS programs.

Other research conducted within U SPORTS and specifically around assets within the Athletic Department was conducted by Chard, Hyatt, and Foster (2003). These scholars utilized Value Dynamics Framework (VDF) to determine the best way to

evaluate the problems of sport-specific organizations (OUA hockey teams and their coaches). Expanding on VDF, the notion of some firms performing to a higher standard because of how/who their portfolio of assets are arranged can be leveraged as insightful. With this being said sport organizations must be able to identify, cultivate and manage these assets that are not easily imitable or sustainable.

Also brand meaning of university sport in Canada has been examined by Chard (2013), as well as brand touchpoints between the athletic department and student-athletes (Chard, MacLean, & Faught, 2013), and finally relative importance of factors that influence Student-Athletes' School-Choice Decisions (Chard & Potwarka, 2017). This study also addressed a need to create a framework for not-for-profit sport-specific organizations for examination and evaluation.

Even though researchers and practitioners alike have had a substantial fascination for managerial work in intercollegiate settings, research around the Canadian context of inter-university athletic directors and athletic administration has yielded minimal empirical attention to date. Moreover, even though the U SPORTS financial climate is very different compared to the NCAA, it is imperative that researchers focus their attention on the resources of these particular institutions. New knowledge would contribute to an understanding of what individuals within Canadian inter-university athletics require in term of competencies.

Danylchuk and Chelladurai (1999) saw this need, and conducted an inter-university athletic research study on athletic administration within Canada. In their study, these scholars used Mintzberg's (1975, 1980, 1994) managerial work as their theoretical

framework, and highlighted that a manager's job cannot be fully understood by means of functions and/or skills. As explained, Danylchuk and Chelladurai (1999) adopted Mintzberg's (1994) conception of managerial work that proposed three concentric circles. Since inter-university athletic departments are embedded into the larger system of the institution, they must follow the educational ideals of the institution (MacLean, 2001). Danylchuk and Chelladurai (1999) use a dated quote by Carlson (1951) to explain that a "manager is a puppet with hundreds of people pulling the strings is truly applicable to managers of Intercollegiate Athletics."

While previous studies have focused their attention on management of athletic departments within the United States, Danylchuk and Chelladurai's (1999) study has extended the phenomenon to include a new organizational context (i.e., Canadian Inter-university Sport (CIS) in greater detail. Secondly, while roles/activities are crucial, it is also important to uncover the relative time spent on each activity, which can adhere to Mintzberg's (1975) assertion that top managers are involved in multiple activities. As well, the concern with the total managerial work in the enterprise, distributed among levels of administration, was integral to Danylchuk and Chelladurai's study (1999). Finally, the differences among subgroups (e.g., university size, number of sports supported by the department, experience of top administrators) may have also impacted managerial activities and the importance placed on them.

Danylchuk and Chelladurai's (1999) research instrument was developed in stages. Phase one provided a review of management literature focused on managerial work, where phase two emphasized managerial work in the sport environment. Upon

completion of the review, they presented the following list of 19 competency categories adjusted to fit inter-university athletics in Canada (p. 153):

1. *Figurehead:* Represent the department in ceremonial activities of the university, community, other agencies, and at other functions and events such as athletic competitions.
2. *Leadership:* Supervise, motivate, inspire, and counsel coaches/staff.
3. *Liaison:* Establish and maintain contacts with university bodies, community agencies, sport governing bodies, and government agencies.
4. *Public Relations:* Communicate with the community at large, alumni, media, and the university community.
5. *Info seeking:* Seek information from athletic organizations, community staff, coaches, and athletes.
6. *Disseminating information:* Pass information to relevant personnel such as coaches and staff.
7. *Lobbying:* Justify the mission and activities of the department, and lobby relevant groups for support.
8. *Policy making:* Set policy, initiate new and innovative projects and services, initiate changes in structure and processes of the department, and create a vision for the department.
9. *Conflict Resolution:* Address issues such as gender equity and personnel conflicts.
10. *Athlete Affairs:* Deal with coach/athlete concerns, disciplinary matters, proper conduct of athletes, eligibility and recruiting questions, and academic requirements of athletes.
11. *Disturbance Handling:* React to pressure and changes beyond one's control such as government cutbacks, tuition fee increases, and emergencies.
12. *Staffing:* Recruit, hire, promote, fire coaches/staff, and negotiate salaries.
13. *Coordination:* Specify and coordinate duties and activities of coaches/staff.
14. *Evaluation:* Provide performance evaluation for coaches/staff and conduct program evaluation.
15. *Maintenance/routine activities:* Schedule practices and competitions, arrange travel, attend to correspondence, meet with coaches/staff, host events, keep records, and prepare reports.
16. *League responsibilities:* Serve on league committees, attend league meetings, and monitor league rules and regulations.
17. *Financial management:* Prepare, monitor, and approve a budget, and allocate resources.
18. *Revenue generation:* Raise funds from the community, university, and government agencies.
19. *Marketing:* Promote events and/or the department, seek sponsorship, and establish ticket pricing.

Given these competencies are clearly described, it appears that individuals interested in athletic administration could begin to develop these competencies, thereby proactively equipping themselves for their future career. The researcher felt that Danylchuk & Chelladurai's (1999) study is a great basis for further qualitative analysis by providing these AD's the opportunity to speak about their own competencies versus having them fill out quantitative surveys. This will provided and updated account from over 18 years of no updated literature around competency of Athletic Director's in U SPORTS.

In this chapter, resource-based view of strategic management, competency-based analysis, managerial work, and athletic administration competency-based analysis was reviewed from broad to the very specific highlighting the athletic director position.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research design and methods used to understand the core competencies needed by athletic directors (ADs) within Canadian inter-university athletics to best deal with role demands are described. Beginning with a review of the study's purpose and the research question, a description of the researcher's paradigm that guided the study will follow. A description of the research design follows, including information about: participant selection/sampling, data collection, recruiting strategies, interviews, pilot interviews, data management and data analysis.

As the majority of existing literature focuses on competency-based analysis of athletic administration in the NCAA context, research on the relevant core competencies necessary for ADs within the U SPORTS context represented a positive opportunity for exploration. Furthermore, studying this topic from a qualitative research design has contributed to existing literature by providing data rich in detail. As such, the following research question was explored in this study:

1. What are the relevant core competencies an OUA Athletic Director requires to effectively perform in his or her position?

Researcher's Paradigm

Advantages of Pragmatic Research

According to Caelli, Ray, and Mill (2003), the advantages of pragmatic research include: flexibility, unique personal guidelines and approaches, gained acceptance in academia, timely answers, and limited criticism. Therefore, the researcher's ability to

conduct work in a flexible manner significantly influenced the research conducted. As well, the researcher upheld this pragmatic paradigm giving him the best opportunity to obtain rich data and insight for academia and practitioners.

As the research purpose sought to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the people involved (Merriam, 1998) the researcher's interpretation of experience was also included (Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen, & Sondergaard, 2009). This approach allowed the researcher to use various methodologies to answer the research question. Also known as "Bricoleur" or "Bricolage" this "pieced together set of representations . . . is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). In this case, the researcher presented meaning from a myriad of qualitative data sources to provide a coherent understanding (Tracy, 2012).

According to Rorty (1979), as stated in Savin-Baden & Major (2013), the pragmatic researcher did "not require adherence to a particular philosophical position about the nature of reality and knowledge, but instead … will [took] a practical view when attempting to problem solve and ... link theory and practice through the research process" (p. 38). Sandelowski (2000), states that it is not easy to collect data with a pragmatic research paradigm, and understand the meaning that participants place on those facts and in turn present them coherently. In this study, the researcher has intended to provide a sufficient approach to understanding the phenomenon of interest, discussed further in the research design. From his main intention, the researcher's next intention was to describe for everyone an understanding, interpretation of the facts, and the

participants' experiences, which follow in Chapter V (Discussion) (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Participant Selection / Sampling

The researcher utilized a purposive sampling strategy to select participants. The researcher chose to use this strategy because participant selection was based on participants' managerial position within the athletic department (i.e., selecting athletic directors of OUA institutions). To participate in the research study, participants worked for a U SPORTS member institution within the OUA and currently hold, or have held the title of Athletic Director or a similarly titled role within the last three years (i.e., Director of Athletics & Recreation). The researcher delimited the purposive sample to represent the OUA conference because it is the largest conference within U SPORTS, with 20 member institutions. Based upon the exceptional response rate, the researcher was able to acquire interview data from 15 ADs within the above conference.

Data Collection

In the current study, the researcher collected multiple forms of data to fulfill the purpose of the study. For example, data in the form job advertisements and interviews transcripts were collected as robust sources to be analyzed and understood. To begin, the researcher conducted a thorough review of previous and current job advertisements that related directly to the position of the AD within U SPORTS or the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) through an online media source. Using the Canadian website SIRC.ca, the researcher was able to acquire 30 job advertisements dated between

2004 - 2015, representative of a number of institutions (i.e., 9 U SPORTS, 21 OCAA). The job advertisements included position titles such as director of athletics, athletic director, and director of athletics and recreation. It is important to note some of the phases of thematic analysis including: phase #2 generating initial codes, and #3 searching for themes, that began during the researcher's data collection phase. In this study, at this stage of data collection, the researcher began to notice themes of interest specifically around competencies that he felt could be later used to derive questions within the semi-structured interview guide.

The OUA and CCAA job advertisements, representation of the primary sources of data in this study, provided what University presidents seek in terms of competence for this particular position. For the purpose of the study, the researcher's use of public documents built a greater understanding around what those individuals, who are a part of the environment, construct as necessary for success in executing this position.

The first review of the job advertisements allowed the researcher to gain a basic understanding of the competencies that Canadian institutions seek in their potential future employees. During the second review, the researcher selected specific requirements and competencies that were discussed and created an inventory of desired competencies.

For example, the researcher chose the competencies of budgeting, development, decision-making and previous experiences. Using these unobtrusive data collection strategies have contributed to gathering preliminary information on competencies necessary for athletic administration, specifically in the Canadian context.

Participant Recruitment

The researcher recruited participants by way of multiple communication avenues (e.g., email, telephone correspondence). For example, given the researcher's previous and current athletic and work experience in this institutional context, he was able to both utilize personal relationships he developed within his own institution and his researcher's supervisor personal network to assist him in gathering participants. Initially, the search sent emails and placed telephone calls to introduce both the research study and the researcher to these targeted participants. If athletic directors were interested in participating, they responded directly to the student investigator by the email or telephone contact information he provided.

Interviews

Savin-Baden and Major (2013) described interviews as a conversation between two individuals in which the researcher strives to ask questions that are relevant to the selected participants. Through this conversation, the researcher's objective was to understand the meaning of what they said (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Tracy (2013) comments on how all forms of qualitative interviews emphasize *verstehen,* a German word meaning, "to understand." This concept suggests that the researcher must be empathetic to participants' views, beliefs, and attitudes that stem from their lived experiences (Tracy, 2013). Moreover, the researcher must enable personal rapport with the interviewees through the interview process that may not be available through other research methods such as online surveys. Building a rapport with the

respondents was integral for them to feel comfortable sharing their knowledge of the position without holding back any information. As stated by Savin-Baden and Major (2013):

> "Interview[s] are appropriate when a researcher wants to take advantage of the one-to-one communication form in order to probe deeply into a participant's experiences, and are ideal when the researcher wishes to follow up initial responses by probing for additional information that can help clarify or illuminate" (p. 358).

In this study, it was necessary for the researcher to personally communicate with participants to collect complex in-depth information (Wengraf, 2001) and to understand the participants' interpretation of needed competencies. In this way, the researcher was not limited to collecting data through questionnaires or surveys, whereby he might not interpret emotion and tone.

Specifically, the form of qualitative interview that the researcher utilized in this study was semi-structured interviews, where he used an interview guide with preset questions, but had the flexibility to ask additional questions formulated from participants' comments and reactions (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). It was important to properly align the researcher's pragmatic paradigm with the data collection approach for gathering the right data during the interview process.

Pilot Interviews

From Turner (2010) the pilot test, "will assist the research in determining if there are flaws, limitations, or other weaknesses within the interview design and will allow him or her to make necessary revisions prior to the implementation of the study" (pg. 757). Before conducting the set of 15 interviews, the researcher utilized the interview guide to

conduct two pilot interviews with former Athletic Directors from the OUA. The researcher's purpose and intent in conducting these pilot interviews were: 1) to allow him to become comfortable with the interview process; 2) determine the challenges that may arise while interviewing participants; 3) test the audio recording equipment. Holding pilot interviews also enabled the researcher to test the questions and obtain feedback from former ADs about the interview guide. This method of enacting a small-scale test through holding pilot interviews has been utilized in many research environments, and can enhance the probability of successfully collecting relevant data (Leon, Davis, & Kraemer, (2011).

In this study, the researcher conducted a type of semi-structured interviews specifically known as respondent interviews with the purpose of building an understanding around the research question (Tracy, 2012). In direct contrast to informants who are articulate in numerous facets of cultural issues, respondents in these kinds of interviews "are relied upon to speak primarily of and for themselves – about their own motivations, experiences, and behavior" (Tracy, 2012, p. 141).

Interview preparation and materials. It was necessary for the researcher to thoroughly prepare to ensure he could collect the most robust details possible from the one-on-one interviews. In this case, the researcher had to ensure he had obtained informed consent from participants before beginning the interview process. The first priority for the researcher was to send a personalized letter of invitation (see Appendix A) and the informed consent form (see Appendix B) to all selected participants via email. This allowed everyone to review the proposed study before agreeing to participate in an

interview. If the selected participant wished to respond, he or she was asked to complete and return the consent form to the researcher and confirm his or her availability to be interviewed.

Given the hectic schedules of these athletic directors, the interviews took place at a location and time that the AD had chosen. Based upon this, interviews were conducted either by telephone or by Skype. The researcher made sure that the interviews were conducted in a room where it was quiet and no disturbances occurred.

Development of interview guide. The interview guide included the following four sections: 1) demographic information surrounding the individual and the institution they represented; 2) a description of the purpose of the study; 3) sections based on the overarching thematic competency categories; and 4) an additional section, which allowed the participants to finish naming any additional competencies.

The interview guide was semi-structured, whereby the interviewer asked a question to initiate the conversation around the specific overarching theme, which was determined by the researcher during the preliminary analysis of the job descriptions. Four areas of interest (Financial, Marketing, Experience, and Leadership) were the basis of the interview guide determined by the researcher from the job advertisements. For example, this question was “Regarding financial competencies, can you please describe how/or what you do in your duties as an Athletic Director?" If the AD needed further prompting, the researcher used pre-selected probes again from the reviewed job descriptions to generate further discussion. For example, around this particular topic of financial

competencies, the researcher selected probes (e.g., revenue generation, alumni donations, budgeting), drawn from the job posting to delve into competencies.

Data Management

The researcher saved the reviewed job advertisements on his computer, labelling them based on their position and school. In addition, the researcher labelled all pertinent academic literature, storing it thematically on his personal computer as well as on an external hard drive. This form of unobtrusive data became important to organize because the researcher's ongoing use of these data throughout the process and was therefore easily accessible. Using citation management software called Mendeley, the researcher stored all relevant articles needed, retaining the option to make notes and search specific terms, phrases, and keywords within the software program. This online management software gave the researcher the opportunity to draw upon this substantial quantity of literature whenever required.

Finally, once the researcher conducted all interviews, he carefully handled the transcripts as a primary data source, treating this material with the utmost respect due to its confidential nature. In order to protect this valuable data, the researcher saved one audio file on a password-protected computer, accessible only by the researcher. As well, the researcher transferred a copy of each interview to a password-protected external data storage device, secured at the researcher's home, thereby protecting these data given the researcher was the only person who knew the password and the location of the external storage device.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of the study, the researcher has framed the thematic analysis as a realist/experiential approach that seeks to explore participants' "reality" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, data analysis was not to be directed towards the development of theory, but rather to provide an understanding of the participants themselves. Taking a semantic approach, "the themes will be identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 13). The following steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) were implemented for thematic data analysis for this study, including: 1) familiarizing yourself with the data; 2) generating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and, 6) producing the report.

First, familiarizing yourself with the data was crucial and began when the researcher transcribed participants' verbal data (Interview data). According to Bird (2005), some see transcription as "a key phase of data analysis within interpretive qualitative methodology" (p. 227). It was important for the researcher to ensure that the transcript retained all the information from the verbal account that was true to what the participant actually said. Once the researcher completed the transcriptions, he immersed himself within the data by reading and re-reading the transcriptions, actively searching for meanings and patterns. The researcher read through the entire data set before initiating the coding process to gain a holistic perspective of these data.

Second, in generating codes, the researcher initially listed codes that were data driven rather than theory driven (i.e., codes were drawn from data sources versus being

drawn from former theory). During this phase, coding was manually done, where the researcher identified interesting aspects of data to form the basis for patterns (themes) across the data set. Utilizing NVivo 10 for PC, the researcher indicated possible patterns to be understood further, later during data analysis.

Third, when searching for themes, the researcher re-focused his attention from the initial codes to the broader level themes, determining codes that had a close relationship with one another and could be grouped within an identified theme. At this stage, when finding some codes did not fit under a specific theme, the researcher did not discard them; rather, he established a miscellaneous thematic category.

To refine themes, the researcher used the fourth phase to review what he already coded and categorized under themes, beginning by reviewing at the level of the coded extracts that the researcher selected. By reading through these extracts, the researcher determined if they appear to form a coherent pattern. If the researcher finds extracts that do not fit within the themes, they will need to rework the themes or create a new theme for those extracts that do not fit. Second, in relation to the entire data set the researcher must determine if the thematic map adequately interprets the meanings of the participants. Based upon the researcher's analytical approach, the point at which no codes or new themes emerge will be satisfactory for this analysis. At the end of this phase Braun and Clarke (2006) note the researcher should have a good indication of the themes, how they work together, and the story they tell about the robust qualitative data.

The final phase was defining and naming themes. Identifying what the essence of what these themes mean is important. In the case of this research, those extracts from the

AD's interview needed to be organized coherently. As well the researcher provides a detailed description of what each theme entails. By the end of this phase, the researcher was able to clearly define what the themes are and what they are not.

To conclude, producing the report is shown within the findings section of this paper. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this report of findings provides "a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story the data tell – within and across themes" (23). This is where the story of the research data convinces the reader, the merit and validity of the analysis and answers the outlined research question.

The quality of research. Through a pragmatic qualitative research design, the researcher engaged in quality research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). With the flexibility of selecting the research design and data collection and analysis strategies, the researcher's core concern was to provide rigour and trustworthiness to the phenomenon under study. Defined by Savin-Baden and Major (2013), trustworthiness "seems congruent with the ideas that fit a critical rational perspective, which holds with the position that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know in our search for objectivity" (p. 470). Rigour "intimates that if researchers are sufficiently diligent, then they will be able to uncover some versions of truth" (p. 471).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described four criteria required to make sure researchers contribute quality work, regarded by Savin-Baden and Major (2013) as the "gold standard" for quality research. First, the *credibility* speaks about if the findings represent the sense of reality faced by those involved (Participants). Second, *transferability* meaning future researchers may come across the research and contest or confirm the

methods and/or results. As well, can the findings be implemented in another context? Third, *dependability* is will this research be relevant moving forward and endure over time? Finally, *confirmability*, has the researcher remained neutral and without bias throughout the duration of the research? By participating in good research practices, the researcher can strategically influence the quality of their work.

Ethical Considerations

Before soliciting any data from participants, the researcher completed and submitted a research ethics application to Brock University's Research Ethics Board in order to obtain ethics clearance to conduct the study. After receiving approval on the application from the Research Ethics Board, the researcher was free to actively engage in the selection and recruitment of participants. This included outlining the purpose of the study to all participants. The researcher also explained to all participants they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without question, to avoid any physical, emotional, psychological, or other forms of harm.

In addition, confidentiality was strictly enforced within this study. To protect the participants and the institutions, pseudonyms were used during the analysis and in the written report, which allowed no traceable evidence to be connected to particular participants and institutions. With further regard to access and storage of data, only the thesis supervisor and the principal researcher could access the research information (i.e., raw data, data analysis).

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to understand the core competencies needed of OUA athletic directors to best perform in their role within inter-university athletics in Canada. Data were obtained from the response to the interviews, which were informed by the job advertisements. These semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 Athletic Directors from Ontario University Athletics (OUA) between November 2016 and January 2017. The researcher categorized interview transcripts data, based upon open coding and a semantic approach, whereby the themes were "identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 13).

In this chapter, management categories are presented that focus on Athletic Directors' perception of competencies required, which have been informed by their *knowledge* of the position itself. Specifically, the categories Athletic Directors' Strategic Oversight & Management, Human Resource Management, Financial Management, and Marketing Management are highlighted (See Figure 6). While the overarching management categories may be broad, a compliment of additional *behaviours*, *skills, abilities, and experiences* assist with understanding the required core competencies of this position. From the interviews conducted, a preliminary OUA Athletic Director competency model is shown below, meant to guide the findings presented in this chapter.

The Athletic Director Competency Model

The 15 OUA Athletic Directors noted a myriad of skills, behaviours, and experiences through relating to the numerous responsibilities inherent in the role (see Figure 5). The outer sections connect through solid lines, indicating competencies working interdependently in some situations. For example, a community outreach initiative put on by an athletic department, could utilize an AD's competencies to provide strategic oversight while empowering the staff they have to execute. Within the situation, the AD's ability to be a figurehead for the department while communicating through positive public relations is necessary. As well depicted within this model are the four sections outlined by dashed lines, indicating the potential for additional factors to be included but haven't been discussed by the 15 ADs.

The Athletic Directors' knowledge in *Strategic Oversight & Management* (Blue) contains seven sub-competencies that Athletics Directors perceived themselves as executing, including: Developing Vision, Developing Policy, Decision-Making, Advocacy, Public Relations, Conflict Resolution, and Multi-tasking. Regarding Human Resource Management (Yellow), five sub-competencies were found to associate, including: Leadership, Empowerment, Delegation, Hiring and Collaboration. Falling under Financial Management (Green) four sub-competencies were found, including: Accountability, Budgeting, Resource Allocation and Revenue Generation. To conclude, five sub-competencies were found within Marketing Management (Orange), including: Branding, Figurehead/Ambassador, Community/Philanthropic Relations, Recruitment and Digital Communication.

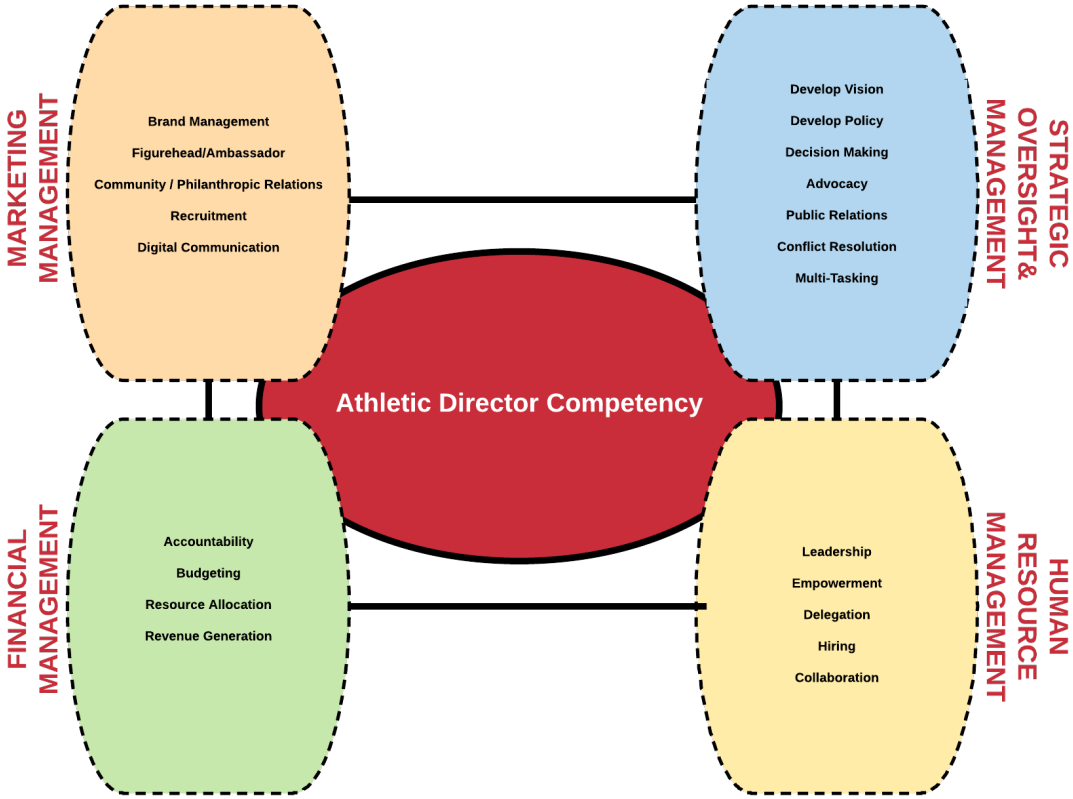


Figure 5. OUA Athletic Director Core Competency Model (2017)

STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT & MANAGEMENT

Developing Vision

Athletic Directors discussed their need to develop a strong vision for the department for which they provided strategic oversight. For example, AD #7 determined that "... the most important thing I do is [to make sure] that we have a strategic vision." This view was also emphasized by AD #6 who expressed, "... I think it starts with what our vision and values are.... Our mission is why our department exists and states that we're here to cultivate human potential and enrich wellness through sport and recreation …" The core competency therefore, that these Athletic Directors defined as integral to their position, was *developing* the "strategic vision ... of the athletic department" (AD #11). This perception came from a desire to "acquire vision for where you want to take your organization or your department." Related to their role in developing the vision, AD #3 believed it is important that "...one of the best things you can do in any job is step outside the boundaries of what your responsibilities are and see how other people do things."

Even though Athletic Directors mentioned their process for seeking information and best practices from other institutions, which in turn helped to develop their own vision, they expressed their desire to maintain control. AD #3 stated, "we can either control our own destiny and our own properties that we develop as (UNIVERSITY) or we can continue to allow everyone else to do it and we only participate. I know what I would rather do." AD #9, for example, mentioned his or her vision to "take and create

perennial, national contenders because that will bring profile, visibility and exposure to the university...” while highlighting how (INSTITUTION) University's (sport) program, “has shifted the culture there around sport” to be inclusive to everyone who would like to be associated. It was found that while Athletic Directors were willing to share their methods and approach to shape the future of their departments for the betterment of the OUA, it remained critical that they each develop and maintain an independent vision for their own institution.

Developing Policy

Athletic Directors also emphasized the importance of creating policy for their departments. AD #7 even went as far as to say, “policy development is, I would say, one of my greatest strengths ... you really have to have a clear set of guidelines on what you’re trying to do.” Supporting this stance, Athletic Directors who had worked in the position for a longer period 5-10 years stated, “... you know, as you get older you get wiser, that’s the first place to start is look and compare and see what other people are doing” (AD #11). AD #1 spoke to the awareness one must have when reviewing other institutional policies, noting, “A lot of the times, I’ll look at other policies at other universities. ... What may work at their place may not work at ours and we’ll try to tailor it to our place.” Athletic Directors further described a need to develop relevant, logical, and flexible policies.

AD #11 also noted, after policies were developed that “... we’re pretty good at following our policies and not making them so rigid that they are hard to operate in.” The ability to develop policy was found centrally important for most Athletic Directors, as

AD #7 succinctly noted when describing the value policies provide "... road maps to get you from point A to B."

Decision-Making

Most the Athletic Directors perceived their responsibilities to be "... at the level of developing, approving, and quality control more than anything else" (AD #7). This Athletic Director described this more specifically noting, "anything strategic or big change would come out of my office." Athletic Directors also noted decision-making capability as an essential competency, expressing that they separated themselves from their managerial counterparts. For example, AD #8 stated, "It's really more the decision making that sets a director apart from a manager." For the Athletic Directors, it was paramount that they have a structured approach to analyzing situations when making decisions. One Athletic Director, said, "I like to have a good knowledge based decision process; so, I like writing down the pros and cons..."(AD #14).

Another Athletic Director even spoke to how the decision-making process differs between institutions, stating, "at a smaller university you can walk down the hall and speak to two people and get something done. At a big university, it takes multiple meetings and competing interests" (AD #13). While AD #14 felt that having this strong decision-making process in place was integral, they provided an example of parting ways with a coach stating, "sometimes you have to make some tough decisions ... sometimes you work with these people and you're ending a relationship.... That comes with the territory."

Advocacy

Athletic Directors noted another critical competency as the ability to advocate for the athletic and recreation department of which they are responsible. From the standpoint of AD #13, their responsibility to advocate goes "... right from the tip of the institution to student expectations, and everything in between." Numerous Athletic Directors discussed their desire to "... constantly articulate how athletics and recreation is critical to the mission of the university" (as stated by AD #14). AD #3, for example, felt strongly that advocating for athletics and recreation was a "... essential service not an extra-curricular activity". Most Athletic Directors noted that the ability to advocate for their department was a necessary core competency in their role and for the wider effective performance of their coaches, student-athletes, their department, and the institution as a whole. AD #14 said:

> ... I have 19,000 swipes in my facility every week. So a big part of that success is athletics, so I have to articulate that to an academic to see what the advantage is. ... I had this talk with (NAME) because they added Men's (Sport) this past year. Why? Because A) athlete retention is very good, and B) recruitment. You know what that means in over four years of tuition and government grants? 1.4 million (pause), 1.4 million. and ... fees and then whatever they pay in residence, food services and in local coffee shops, and whatever on campus which we're all making a buck on, or intramural programs so that's how you constantly remind people that we're not just the place to keep students busy while the real learning is taking place in lecture (AD #14).

Contrastingly, Athletic Directors stressed their need to both comprehend and work in concert with what was going on at the higher institutional level, as AD #8 explained that it "... can be pretty bureaucratic ... it's like ... there is a lot of diplomacy and people don't say exactly what they mean at times." Therefore, Athletic Directors believed an

ability to "... know how to work in a large hierarchy and where to give and where to push" (AD #8), was essential in advocating for their department.

Public Relations

Related to the skills needed to advocate, a majority of Athletic Directors determined that a strong competency in public relations, was similarly fundamental for the role. AD #12 noted "there's not any other director at the university, in the media, like the athletic director. So, you could be in the media as much as a top researcher or the President, for that matter." Further, AD #8 described the importance of this competency around public relations:

> ... you are the face and spokesperson for your institution and department and your department's programs and that's important. You're lucky when it's good news and the good times, but unfortunately sometimes you have to be the person out there addressing negative situations.

Whether it is for "good" or "bad situations", Athletic Directors described their need "... to be a very good communicator, particularly with the media" (AD #4). This ability to communicate is further highlighted in the following sub-competency, Conflict Resolution.

Conflict Resolution

AD #6 addressed this ability when they stated, "when things go bad, I think you need to step up and make sure that you ... keep things under control and represent the university and the department well." AD #2 further defined this competency as a need to be strong and representative of the institution, "... sort of damage control and when issues popped up that might be real or perceived about athletics that took a chunk of my time."

Athletic Directors provided examples, involving student-athlete or coach infractions, existing both internal within and external to the institution. From these examples, there seemed to exist a heightened degree of involvement and responsibility in handling a disturbance on the varsity side of the department as AD #4 noted, "if there is a disciplinary action or problem on the team or there is a code of conduct infraction... I'm absolutely involved..." AD #4, for example, described a situation where their ability to manage through the conflict was important, stating "we recently had an incident in hockey where an institution was accusing one of our players of doing something ... conflict resolution is important and how you can manage through that."

Multi-Tasking

The ability to multi-task was noted as a key competency by many of the Athletic Directors given the myriad roles and responsibilities inherent in the position. Here, AD #3 noted how the role was "...varied and deep and pretty wide in scope." Indeed, AD #5 described the many tasks under their portfolio including, "managing staff, managing coaches, and managing students, budgets, donors, and alumni fundraising while adhering to various policies, procedures, and requirements." AD #7 supported this diversity of responsibility noting oversight to include:

> ... Management of all our athletic and recreation programs including varsity sport, intramural sport, sports clubs, and recreational activities ... I oversee our athletic facilities both the planning and maintenance/operation of those including capital planning. I also have the financing of that unit … we also do advancement work in support of our teams and programs.

It was found that the need to be a capable multi-tasker within the scope of responsibility of the position was both a necessary skill but also a compelling part of the

AD role in Ontario. For example, AD #8 explicitly stated “one thing I really like about being an Athletic Director is the diversity of challenges and responsibilities in the position.”

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Leadership

It was found that some Athletic Directors relate aspects of their competency in leadership to that of coaching or teaching. Here, AD #8 noted how, “you set the framework, the game plan; it’s not much different than being a coach for a team”; whereas AD #14 described their style of leadership more as, “... an educator.” Through an analysis of respondents' data, there was no exact method to leading in this position; however, each Athletic Director seemed very aware of how he or she personally led in the role. For example, AD #12 offered, “I would say my style is very authentic." This perspective on various styles of leadership was supported by AD #8 who stated, “I’d say transformational... Sometimes you have to stand on principles and sometimes you have to be willing to adjust and be flexible...”, while AD #1 supported their teaching style of leadership, noting “... that I like to lead by example...” To further summarize the moral relationship to their leadership, AD #12 commented, “I wouldn’t ask you to do anything that I wouldn’t do myself.”

The styles of leadership utilized by these Athletic Directors seemed significant in trying to achieve peak performance within their departments. A consensus among Athletic Directors existed in that respondents perceived that the role is shifting from

being authoritative toward what AD #2 suggests is more "... about being receptive and being a good teammate as well as being a good leader." AD #7 also saw it beneficial in making sure to have "... a bit of fun a long the way." When the Athletic Directors discussed their competency in leadership, it was almost unanimous that they saw their leading as overseeing a group effort. AD #7 indicated, "I think the key for me in leadership is making sure that everybody... can see they are contributing to where we are going." Shifting from authoritative leadership style, AD #3 provided a strong summary of the general ability to lead as an Athletic Director within the Canadian inter-university athletic system stating, "leadership to me is never something that you stand on a table and scream and yell..." In this case, findings highlight the passion Athletic Directors have to lead by example and influence employee productivity through empowerment.

Empowerment

As in any business, an integral behaviour of human resource management is the ability to empower staff based on the findings. Many Athletic Directors spoke to the need for empowerment to be successful within their own role. Athletic Directors believed empowerment enabled them to better oversee and manage, "…. more from a 10,000 foot perspective" as AD #10 offered. AD #2 highlighted significant benefits gained from empowering others, stating,

> ... It's about developing people in their roles. … It goes back to what I was saying about if I'm a good leader; if you can do the role and I can just step away. There is a saying "you let them grow but you don't want to sit under the shade of their tree", I think that's so important. I would want someone to grow and develop and I could step away and they become independent. Can I always mentor those people? Absolutely, but independence is part of a great leader.

The true value that Athletic Directors had to influence their staff was shown to be very fulfilling. As AD #3 goes on to explain this resulting positive:

> ... to me, being a leader is that, empowering people, while giving them some direction. If you take time with someone they know it. That's not taking it to an extreme; but on a work basis, if people know you're looking out for them or 'have their back,' it's very empowering.

The ability to positively encourage those for whom they were responsible was integral to these Athletic Directors and their success. AD #2 commented, "making people feel valued, making them feel that they've made a great contribution and giving people the freedom to explore their ideas and make mistakes." Many Athletic Directors also "... let them [their staff] be the champions and leaders in what they want to do" (AD #11), while AD #14 acknowledged that empowerment was important to try "... to move them towards the pursuit of their passions." Most Athletic Directors voiced it was important to recognize their staff and, "encourage them and provide them what they need to move forward" (AD #8). Fundamentally, it was found that through empowering people, Athletic Directors could create a positive influence for potential departmental success. As AD #3 found "… it's about creating opportunities for others to be successful" and delegating tasks where they believe others would be well suited to fulfill them.

Delegation

When asked to speak more in detail about how opportunities were presented, Athletic Directors expressed that *delegation* of responsibilities was a predominant and necessary competency. Athletic Directors such as AD #13 commented on their need to "understand(ing) the minutia is important but not being involved in the day-to-day

operation is critical." A majority of Athletic Directors described that part of their responsibility is to allow their specialized staff to execute and be, "... the soldiers out there" (AD #2). Two primary areas of the department in which Athletic Directors noted to be delegated included finance and marketing.

First, AD #10 highlighted one example where they're "responsible for setting the direction, and setting the budget ... in terms of actual execution of the contracts and paying of expenses ... we have a finance manager who does all of that for us." Other responsibilities Athletic Directors indicated had been delegated to specialized individuals were, "Director of Business Operations" (AD #13), "Marketing Manager" (AD #14), "Manager of Brand development" (AD #4), and "Associate Director" (AD #12). Moreover, AD #7 mentioned their Associate Director, "... who is responsible for business development so sponsorship, communication, and events." Therefore, Athletic Directors felt the need to find those individuals who may provide specialized support was an aspect of the role that could come from their ability to hire.

Hiring

From these data, it was found that related to Human Resource Management, Athletic Directors unanimously felt "the biggest absolute chunk, as AD's every day, is managing people" (AD #13). As AD #8 specified "I probably spend 50% of my time on human resources and that's not necessarily a bad thing." More specifically, an understanding in "... hiring, assessing, evaluating people and leading them as they lead their programs forward" was what AD #10 felt was essential to the Athletic Director position. When the discussions centred on the specific skill of hiring, AD #7 suggested,

"I guess my area is in talent management. I'm keen on finding people who have huge potential and nurturing their potential so they can do incredible things." Athletic Directors discussed that "it's clearly about getting good people" (AD #12). The importance of hiring and staffing the department with the right people was key to AD #14, offering,

> ... I always have the saying invest in people, improve the product and win. Investing in people means hiring good people, often people smarter than I am. Good coaches, administrators, programmers, sports medicine staff, event staff, facility staff and so on.

AD #12 proposed that, "There are components of some jobs that you can teach, but you can't teach them core values for instance. I think it is about fit." Interestingly, AD #10 related his experience of hiring and assessment to the Oakland Athletics, noting, "we like to say to ourselves, we're kind of like the Oakland Athletics. We're playing Money ball. We're punching well above our weight... first thing is recruiting the best people that you can..." Making reference to Michael Lewis' novel Money Ball that told the story of the 2002 Oakland Athletics' use of advanced statistic to get the best performance out of the resources that they had or could acquire. AD #14 offered an example of assessing human resources related to hiring a coach:

> ... I look at competencies of coaches, because nobody is perfect and they need to surround themselves with the behaviours that they don't have or the competencies that they don't have. So, if a coach is not as much of a detailed person, I'll hire either a student manager to clean up the stuff that annoys them or an assistant coach will take that role.

AD #10 further outlined the Athletic Directors' ability to hire and support coaches, acknowledging that coaches "... work long hours and need to feel that they are supported." AD #10 further stated this support needed to be fostered with "... trust as

much as anything else." Similarly, in discussing the need to support their coaches, many Athletic Directors mentioned their own self-awareness as one competency gap. AD #9 highlighted such a recognition, acknowledging, "... I bring expertise in a lot of areas but not one hundred percent in every area, so clearly I've got people helping." The Athletic Directors furthered this conversation by explaining internal and external collaboration with whom they work with.

Collaboration

Internal (Department and University)

Athletic Directors continuously noted the important ability to collaborate with others as a necessary competency understanding that when it came to planning or executing, "... there needs to be room for others" (AD#14). From AD #7's perspective, the need to be collaborative had evolved from the department across the institution. This AD noted "before, it was managing your teams, coaches, and staff, those people who were interested in you. Now, there's a lot more necessity to be collaborative and consultative with other members of the university." The ability to collaborate was an important requirement in many aspects of the position; AD #4 outlined one example of collaboration around the planning of a specific event, noting that, "I involved all of our departments, student affairs, campus safety, residence life folks, our student government. I had a committee built to build the (EVENT NAME) game and they all basically worked together to deliver that event."

External

More externally focused, Athletic Directors also emphasized they were in a competitive business; AD #14 pointed out they also "... have to keep the mindset that as an Athletic Director you're looking at the big picture of sport because you're a contributor to sport development across the province, across the country... so we have to collaborate." Even though Athletic Directors may compete for similar resources across the nation, AD #4 commented how they, "... want to beat each other up on the field, but behind the scenes, we work really well together and I think that's very important (AD #4). From this wider scope, collaboration was found to be one of Athletic Directors' core competencies. AD #3 described how collaboration was also key among all Athletic Directors within Canadian inter-university athletics stating, "sometimes you have to step back and say that's not as good for me as I'd like it to be, but the results for everybody, including myself, in the long-term projection is going to be better." This comment made by AD #3 related directly to their belief at the association level (OUA) and the national governing body level (U Sports), that all AD's together are always looking to improve and this can be assisted by having a collaborative mindset.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Accountability

Athletic Directors considered one competency as critical to their position: financial accountability. Here, the AD's ability to provide an understanding of where and how funds were being spent within their areas of responsibility was central. Discussions delved into the evolution of the position itself, where in previous years, ADs' were given

far greater autonomy, specific to how they utilized financial accounting. AD #12 highlighted this point, offering,

> ... I think there's more accountability across the board about any money you receive ... Again, 20 years ago people didn't really care. You got an allotment of money, you spent it kind of the way you wanted to and there wasn't accountability.

Athletic Directors outlined how now they are financially accountable to more than the institution itself; AD #13 pointed out they needed to be able to "... tell students how we're spending their money around what programs we are giving them." Other Athletic Directors (e.g., AD #11) discussed an ongoing need to justify dollars being spent in "... boardroom discussions with senior administration around ... the importance of athletics and recreation." According to AD #12, an AD's financial accountability seemed fundamental to their responsibility within athletic administration and represented another competence that ensured AD's could continue to "... intersect with the academic world."

Budgeting

Given the magnitude of operations, most athletic and recreation departments supported "... operational budgets for both varsity and campus recreation. That includes salaries, travel budget, equipment budgets" (AD #10); Athletic Directors unanimously acknowledged budgeting as a required competency. Certain Athletic Directors (e.g., AD #6), mentioned the importance of "... organizational finance... some budgeting skills," while AD #5 explained it was critical to possess an awareness of how the department or "... your business fits into the larger corporation and university that you work at." AD #5

emphasized the importance in both understanding budgeting and the ability to actually budget, further explaining that,

> ... You are managing a business and people have to understand. ... It's a multi-million dollar budget and you have money coming in and out. You have to adhere to budgets. ... (Emphasis added) *Managing that engine is kind of big*. You obviously have to set your budgets on a yearly basis and do quarterly reports like any other business. At the same time, you have to work with the university financial structure...

Based on the financial responsibility of the Athletic Directors, AD #5 pointed out that Athletic Directors had to become increasingly "good at being frugal." AD #11 supported this notion, stating there was also an increased need to "... come up with different innovative ways to do things cheaper" while providing the same programs and support to their department. AD #6 pointed out that the Athletic Director's competency in budgeting was directly related to their ability to "... manage and monitor... that's a basic skill that a lot of managers should have and it's important because we don't have excess funds to squander."

Resource Allocation

It was found that a fundamental competency was the ADs to continually support all constituents fairly and with enough money. AD #13 promoted this requirement stating, "... it's my job to ensure that I find our department the resources it needs to actually accomplish what it wants to do." Further, AD #7 highlighted this particular competency, as they saw the role as a juggler who managed the ongoing requests for more, stating that,

> ... More funds, travel, people, coaches and so really as an AD you're more and more trying to figure out how to fund those requests and do it in a way that creates

> a balanced approach taking into consideration recreation and varsity men/women (sport).

Multiple Athletic Directors discussed the need for this balanced approach, clearly expressing how it this was a challenging part of the position. From this perspective, AD #7 acknowledged that Athletic Directors were consistently answering some tough questions such as, "so, how do you support your teams? How do you invest your money wisely? If you have a team that needs more investment to make them more competitive or build, how are you going to allocate those funds?" Clearly, Athletic Directors felt their ability to strategically allocate resources to numerous constituents was an ongoing challenge they faced. AD #8 highlighted how the need to balance between, "where you have a larger program that has a participant base versus a program that has more public visibility and high cost", never stopped. As AD #7 pointed out, Athletic Directors must try "... to balance all those diverging points of view and come up with something that is very meaningful and impactful for all constituents."

Revenue Generation

The demand on the Athletic Directors' ability to generate revenue was found to be significant based on the findings in this study. AD #7 noted how the role of the Athletic Director had evolved stating, "it's all about generating resources that's what AD's, the new generation of AD's are. It's very business focused now." Further highlighting the need for this important competency, AD #9 stressed that "at the end of the day we always have to look at revenue opportunities... it's critical and I see it being very important for us." AD #9 offered additional revenue generating options, listing among them "... tenants

in our building, tickets, and merchandise, the programs we run within the campus, rentals that we have, corporate sponsorship and the other piece is philanthropy, through alumni."

Specifically, AD #8 discussed the need to "... be better fundraisers", in order to generate the additional resources needed for sustainability and growth. Athletic Directors felt their ability to strategically develop fundraising support was an area whereby they saw a competitive advantage for their departments. AD #12 discussed this point, suggesting a strategic approach was necessary to fundraising:

> ... There is an art and science to fundraising. The art is building the relationships; the science is you ask so many people with so much capacity you can raise money. I think it's a combination of that but some can be predicted. .... The risk would be if you became dependent on that annual support, so I think that we fundraise to enhance the program and not to provide base fundraising.

As AD #3 summarized, "we're not the same across the country; in some cases, we are seen as the same based on our position, but our portfolios, resources and what we have to work with are very, very different." AD #5 emphasized the Athletic Directors' ability to successfully generate new revenue "... outside the box" of the "... traditional ways" as imperative to take their "... experience, background, and knowledge to find new opportunities," as doing so provided them with a possibility of heightened competitive advantage over other institutions within the OUA.

MARKETING MANAGEMENT

Brand Management

Athletic Directors discussed their ability to manage the brand of their athletic and recreation departments within Ontario. On multiple occasions, Athletic Directors noted

they are “the front porch for the university” (AD #6). Continuing with this perspective, AD #6 firmly stated:

> ... a lot of people find access and get to know the university through the sports' and recreation programs whether it’s through being fans at our games or using our health club or renting out our facilities. In a lot of ways, we are the primary face of the university for a lot of people.

Brand management has been a critical area for which Athletic Directors provide knowledge within their departments they oversee and manage. AD #5 echoed this perception when they stated that they are “more protective but opportunistic with what we can do with the brand...” Although Athletic Directors discuss that each institution and the resources that they have are different, the brand is something that each university and their departments have gained full control of. “We’re very focused on our brand and making sure we’re consistent across the department (AD #9) as well as making “... sure that plans stay on track” (AD #11). As some Athletic Directors maintain a desire to stay in control of their brand, some may also see an increased awareness of the brand of the institution being promoted through sport:

> ... The (NAME) brand. Really 43,000 students are (NAMES) and not only the 1,000 that are doing the sports. We need to elevate the brand and the only way we can do that is making 43,000 on this campus feel like they are (NAMES) and the 8,000 staff that are here and make them feel like (NAMES). Because we’re all (NAMES). I mean if you went to the universities in the United States, you didn’t have to play sports to be a (e.g.) Michigan Wolverine. The brand piece is critical and it is one we are working with the university overall and one we’re greatly pushing in terms of building the value of the property and the way we want to (AD 9).

The Athletic Directors’ desire to maintain a strong brand comes from being the “... one's active in trademark protection” (AD #13) and making sure that their staff “... deliver the brand product” (AD #13) in a way that will positively affect the institution.

Philosophically speaking, AD #2 shows that everyone capsulated by sport has a part in sharing the brand the right way, stating,

> ...whether you're a coach or an AD ... You're always trying to sell yourself and your program, whether it's your sport, program or your university. So you're constantly marketing. You know it's about a philosophy and an image that you want to put out there so that as you try to attract recruits, clients, sponsors, businesses to jump onboard you've set the stage already.

Community/Philanthropic Relations

It was found that Athletic Directors saw their role within the community toward a more philanthropic end as a core competency. For example, AD #8 noted, "community relations are a huge part to me because you're part of the university, community and municipality and even Ontario. You have a responsibility to give back to your community and surrounding area." This responsibility about which AD #8 speaks was also supported by AD #14, as they discussed the opportunity inter-university sport has to serve others and the communities within which they are placed. As well, the support of Athletic Directors to their staff and students goes well beyond providing the finances to run their teams and programs, as reinforced by AD #6, who stated "... we not only support our students as athletes but also members of the community." While making reference to a hockey team, AD #14 describes how philanthropic activities provide an additional opportunity for growth, noting,

> ... a defensemen right, he has to help his goalie, he has to move the puck up to the forward who passes it up the centre, centre has to take the faceoff and get it back to the forward or defense. They're actually serving.

From the top down, Athletic Directors play "... a massive role being engaged and involved with the community" (AD #5) and see that a greater impact can be made

additional to "... going to a park and painting the playground." From the role of the Athletic Directors, AD #10 states, "my role is not as much executing them as it is trying to spearhead them and drive them forward and they're executed by others. We try to promote that culture within the department."

Figurehead/Ambassador

Many Athletic Directors saw the responsibility of setting the tone and being a positive example as a critical part of their respective role. This required the AD's to draw upon a core competency of being a positive and encouraging Figurehead/Ambassador. For example, AD #7 felt strongly that, "you are the face of your athletic brand and you are the ambassador of that brand." Most Athletic Directors discussed some responsibilities they held as an ambassador for their institution. As AD #11 stated,

> ... my responsibility within that context is someone who is available to present that award or speak at a gala or meet for breakfast with that potential donor and really provide that support that defines or reemphasizes what the staff is putting in place.

Furthermore, AD #5 highlighted the weight of this competency, saying "the demand on your time is more than it was before [years previously] and the expectation is greater." The current AD's discussed this expectation of "... public appearances and fundraisers"; and, as AD #14 suggested, it is "... very interesting because it's a job that is a little bit in the spotlight."

Recruitment

Given the totality of the Athletic Directors' job, their responsibility is also to "... consider and keep and mind that we're recruiting.... We're always keeping a sharp eye on

how we do things and what will enhance (UNIVERSITY) position in kids' and their parent's minds" (AD #3). The knowledge to direct their efforts to recruit is crucial, based upon the acknowledgement that enrolment at post-secondary institutions has decreased over time. AD #6 efforts have been placed on "... trying to attract people, students that not only want to be competitive in terms of the sports they play, but also be successful ... in school." Recruitment has been described as a "... unique opportunity" (AD #3), and is shown to be of even greater value to AD #9, when emphasizing,

> ... recruitment is about creating an emotional attachment for these kids. When they come into the school and come to the campus it is not the lab that they go look at; that won't be the sole thing that brings them to the school. It's going to be what the facility looks like, what activities are offered, and everything else. The emotional attachment is about the student overall and not just the academic side.

From this quote, Athletic Directors view recruitment as a potential source of competitive advantage to their departments. Showcasing athletic and recreation as a piece of the overall experience has been a way that Athletic Directors promote their institutions and departments as a part of recruitment. In closing, AD #3 comments further on their belief in providing opportunities even greater than what academia provides, stating,

> ... we have a unique opportunity here and every other university does too is to set a tempo and watermark that it's not just about school. It's more than just academics that are important and that's why you're here. Right beside that along the way is something that is special and we want them to achieve an experience.

Digital Communication

One emergent area that Athletic Directors discuss that has "... popped up in the last 5 years" (AD #12), is their understanding of how digital media (social media) needs to be implemented into their marketing strategy. Even though a select handful of Athletic

Directors discussed this competency, AD #11 advocates “One hundred percent I would say it is transcending how we communicate” and is something that Athletic Directors must obtain if they don’t already possess the skill/knowledge. AD #6 truly believed that “... advertising will not promote your brand but social media [digital media] delivers to your customers what’s being offered” that strengthens the point that AD #6 had already described around these athletic and recreation departments being the “... front porch to the university.” While Athletic Directors may not be the specific individuals creating the content or sending out tweets, their staff maintain and keep accounts (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, Youtube), updated with relevant content. Being able to showcase sports on a wide variety of digital platforms is important for Athletic Directors within inter-university sport in Ontario, in 2018

Based on the perceptions of the 15 interviewed Canadian Athletic Directors within the OUA, a competency model was created. Four main competency categories were highlighted (i.e., Strategic Oversight and Management; Human Resource Management; Financial Management; and Marketing Management), while rich details pertaining to each categories core competencies were presented. It was found through this research and the related literature that Athletic Directors who possessed these skills, knowledge, behaviours, and abilities would provide their athletic and recreation departments a greater potential competitive advantage over other institutions. Which will be discussed in great detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V: Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the Athletic Directors' key perceptions of core competencies (see Figure 5) to existing theory and research, while contributing to both U SPORTS and sport management literature. As Athletic Directors are a human capital resource to their department, they provided the most relevant understanding of the competencies necessary to best perform in their roles. It is imperative that those individuals who hold the position of Athletic Director have core competencies in a wide array of management areas to perform given their position within the department. As scholars have exerted minimal empirical attention solely on Canadian university athletic administration (U SPORTS), this competency-based analysis provides an updated understanding. With literature pertaining to Resource Based View (RBV), Competency-Based analysis, Managerial work, and Athletic Administration, both in the NCAA and U SPORTS organizational contexts, the following research question guided this study:

RQ 1. What are the relevant core competencies an OUA Athletic Director requires to effectively perform in his or her position?

Since the position of Athletic Director represents the most influential level of executives in sport administration within an inter-university athletic department, it is beneficial to know what competencies are necessary for this role. In the current investigation, findings included four main management categories (i.e., Strategic Oversight and Management, Human Resource Management, Financial Management, Marketing Management) and their respective sub-competencies.

It was found that Athletic Directors provide important Strategic Oversight and Management to their departments; this was highlighted as a fundamental area. Athletic Directors discussed their abilities to develop, approve and monitor the athletic and recreation departments for which they are responsible. Secondly, those interviewed estimated the Athletic Directors' competency in Human Resource Management as occupying over 50% of their various responsibilities. Fascinating insight from their leadership styles guided a valuable conversation around the ability to empower their staff to execute tasks. As well, the Athletic Directors' abilities to hire the appropriate staff also contribute to the potential competitive advantage of the department.

Of obvious importance, as the athletic and recreation departments continue to be fiscally responsible for their operations, Athletic Directors' competence in Financial Management must be strong and practiced. From the findings, Athletic Directors maintain oversight and set the budget strategy that enables their constituents the resources they require for the operation of their specific programs (e.g. Varsity Hockey Coach – Equipment, Travel, etc.). In concert with finance, one area of this particular category of competency that has shown significant growth in recent decades, deemed important by all Athletic Directors, was the ability to generate revenue for their departments. Finally, Marketing Management was determined to be an essential category for Athletic Directors. Therefore, Athletic Directors' understanding of managing the brand and how to promote to current or potential students/community members is critical.

Interpretation of Findings

As Wernerfelt (1984) stipulates, resources are key to superior firm performance and serve as a potential source of competitive advantage. Here, the Athletic Director is classified under what Barney (1991) calls human capital, one of three categories of resources available to an organization. From the findings, Athletic Directors clearly need competencies in multiple areas. Gaining resources that could potentially lead to success is an ongoing desire, not just in inter-university athletics, but in other business areas as well. The researcher identifies a number of new insights (Multi-tasking, Recruitment, Digital Communication) and confirms several core competencies that were found to be of importance decades ago. Next, each managerial category and the corresponding core sub-competencies as they relate/differ to previous literature will be discussed.

Strategic Oversight & Management

Athletic Directors discussed their core competencies in development, decision-making, advocacy, public relations, Conflict Resolution, and multi-tasking. Porter (1980) defines strategy as, "a combination of the *ends* (goals) for which the firm is striving and the *means* (policies) by which it is seeking to get there" (p. xvi). Athletic Directors must think critically and determine the best strategic path for the departments they manage, also presented by Boyatzis' (1982) in his competency model. Outlining how managers behave, Athletic Directors spoke to competencies including Efficiency & Proactivity (Goal and Action Management Cluster) and Conceptualization (Leadership Cluster).

Athletic Directors discussed their need to *develop a vision* for their department. This creative ability to determine how their department carries out daily activities may have been established deep in the tradition and culture of the institution. Or for some Athletic Directors, developing the vision toward where and what their department would strive, was an opportunity they did not overlook. In the scope of the Athletic Directors' competency, developing a vision is more of an imaginative oversight that enabled these individuals to separate themselves from other institutions. This creative ability could lead to potential competitive advantage and was also shown within studies conducted using RBV. For example, Smart and Wolfe's (2000) research conducted on the Pennsylvania State University's Football Program found that history, relationships, trust and organizational culture as resources led to the organization's successful competitive advantage. Accompanying the Athletic Director's development of vision is the *development of policies* and procedures that help structure a department's operations. The more structured of the two, policy must be woven into every aspect of the department. While Athletic Directors acknowledged both developmental competencies (i.e., vision, policy), their perceptions were consistent with previous literature indicating their importance to the role (Boyatzis, 1982; Smart & Wolfe, 2000; Hardin, Cooper, Huffman, 2013).

Athletic Directors cited specific examples of situations requiring sound strategic oversight that occurred at their own institutions; through these examples a commonality was the ability to make decisions. This is congruent with Inglis (1988), who noted that Athletic Directors are positioned as the prime decision maker in the department they

oversee. As the leader of the athletic and recreation departments, the Athletic Directors stated that they held the final decision-making authority. Although AD #13 mentioned how the differences in the size of the institution could impact how decisions are made, Danylchuk and Chelladurai (1999), indicates that all institutions' athletic and recreation departments are facing similar challenges. Specifically, Athletic Directors and their departmental employees must consistently and strategically face oversight and decisions regarding challenges such as resource scarcity (i.e., financial, human) (Danylchuk & MacLean 2001; Aughey, Danylchuk & Lebel, 2011; Chard, 2013; Chard, MacLean, & Faught, 2013a; Chard, Hyatt, & Foster, 2013b).

For Athletic Directors, they must make decisions with a strong process that is well thought out and considers various perspectives in order to determine the best answer for the department. As their department is responsible for many facets of institutional activity including: varsity athletics, campus recreation, intramurals, and community programming, the Athletic Director's signature/approval impacts a variety of stakeholders. Therefore, their strength in decision-making is fundamental to their role.

Athletic Directors also highlighted the competency to *advocate* on behalf of their department as important to their position, a finding directly relating to Armstrong-Doherty's (1995) study, whereby Athletic Directors emphasized that they required greater support for athletics and recreation from the President and senior administration. As such, the Athletic Director's ability to nurture constructive rapport with senior administration (Aughey, Danylchuk, & Lebel, 2011) is extremely necessary, given a coherent explanation of why your department's service is essential to the overall performance of

the organization can significantly impact the possibility of a competitive advantage for the department. The requirement for the competency of advocating has not changed and continues to be a necessary competency for Athletic Directors.

Given the potential for the Athletic Director to be in the media as much as the President of the institution, their competency in *public relations* has been described. Frequently, Athletic Directors represent the "front-line" to external media regarding a situation around a high profile student-athlete; therefore, an Athletic Director's ability to communicate professionally both internally and with the public is a crucial core competency. As indicated by Danylchuk and Chelladurai (1999), and Hatfield, Wrenn, and Brenning, (1987), this competency has been important in past decades. However, based on how complex organizational business environments have become and the increased awareness through media channels; the number of incidences that arise on a yearly basis require more of the Athletic Director's attention.

Whether they're involved with regard to a negative or positive situation, the Athletic Director must be able to communicate and provide the correct information and oversight in a timely matter. When their involvement concerns *conflict resolution*, the Athletic Director must be able react accordingly. Although it is certainly not the best part of the role described by the Athletic Directors, occasions or incidents that arise resulting from a disturbance may involve an athlete, a team or the coaching staff. Serious incidents require the Athletic Director to execute using his full array of competencies to resolve the matter. As described by several Athletic Directors in this study, their skill in resolving

disturbing situations is crucial. As aligned with the findings, strong competence in conflict resolution is critical to the Athletic Director in resolving such situations.

Athletic Directors currently working within Canadian inter-university sport are being pulled in numerous directions, so their ability to *multi-task* and effectively prioritize is integral to their effective job performance. From being actively engaged in setting the strategic vision, to representing their department at community initiatives, Athletic Directors have a myriad of responsibilities that require a multitude of core competencies presented in the current research. Adhering to Mintzberg (1975), top managers are involved in multiple activities; it is therefore key that Athletic Directors be competent in managing their time. While numerous scholars have focused on managerial attention in sport administration (Danylchuk & Chelladurai, 1999; Chard, MacLean, & Faught, 2013a; Chard, Hyatt, & Foster, 2013b; Chard & Potwarka, 2017), none have considered multi-tasking to be a core competency. From the findings, Athletic Directors' ability to effectively manage their time has been shown to positively contribute to their role.

Human Resource Management

As Athletic Directors have determined their responsibilities with regard to human resource management are crucial, a further understanding of the specific core competencies required was fundamental to this research study. Outlined as the leader in athletic administration (Danylchuk & Chelladurai, 1999; Won, Bravo, & Lee, 2012; Hardin, Cooper, & Huffman, 2013), findings highlighted that Athletic Directors were required to be flexible in the ways that they drove their departments forward. For

example, leadership was described synonymously with terms including ‘authenticity’ and ‘transformational’; however one common competency existed. These Athletic Directors had to be *pragmatic* and adjust to what the situation dictated. In some cases, this meant taking an authoritative stance for the betterment of the department while in other cases, their *leadership* was the ability to *empower* others, which enabled them to execute appropriately. Based on the complexity of the organization (Whisenhart & Pedersen, 2004), good leadership in athletic administration is integral to motivating and influencing staff (Won, Bravo, & Lee, 2012).

Athletic Directors are not asking their staff to do something that they would not do themselves. According to Minztberg (1994), a manager (i.e., in this case, an Athletic Director) must, "encourage and drive the people of their units – motivate them, inspire them, coach them, nurture them, push them, mentor them, and so on” (p. 19). The importance of a leader's ability to empower subordinates, was also highlighted by Bass, (1985) and Bass and Avolio, (1990) as a significant component of effective leadership. As such, Athletic Directors who influence their staff to feel confident in their own abilities are at a potential competitive advantage over those who become involved in micromanaging behaviours.

Scholars including Likert (1967) and McGregor (1960) describe that *delegating* responsibility to subordinates is one way to effectively manage. The Athletic Directors made it very clear that they delegated a majority of the day-to-day tasks to staff that were better suited to fulfill them. The researcher considers this to be a substantial finding that has not been explicitly perceived to be of concrete importance in past studies examining

athletic administration. While the term “delegate” could be deemed authoritative to some, within this study, Athletic Directors delegate as a way to provide positive opportunities to their staff, building upon how they lead. Further, given the multitude of managerial activities within their responsibilities, delegation is important as it affords the Athletic Director the time and opportunity to continue to look to the future and strategize.

In order for Athletic Directors to seek competitive advantage, their own description of *hiring* is consistent with the literature. Hiring directly relates to the RBV, where Athletic Directors develop competitive advantage by acquiring, effectively deploying and developing their physical capital and organizational capital resources (Barney, 1991). Collins (2001) popularized the concept of having “the right people on the bus”, while the current study supports the ‘Good to Great’ axiom, which emphasizes the Athletic Directors’ delegation of their staff as a core competency with Human Resource management. As well, the Athletic Director’s own self-awareness enables the individuals they hire to determine their own strengths and weaknesses; leading them to hire new staff members or find those members of the department who have specialization within areas they personally are not comfortable in. This self-awareness was shown when Athletic Directors spoke about day-to-day financial and marketing management.

While apparent competition for resources and a desire for competitive advantage are increasing, Athletic Directors have seen the influence they once had shift to be more collaborative in nature (Schneider & Stier, 2004). The athletic departments of institutions are shown to be labour intensive with numerous stakeholders (Smart & Wolfe, 2000) and those managing them must be able to collaborate with those constituents. As findings

indicate, the Athletic Directors involvement stays at a strategic management level and opportunities arise for collaboration with both internal and external constituents associated with their departments. As research has predominantly focused internally within athletic administration (Danychuk & Chelladurai, 1999; Smart & Wolfe, 2000; Whisenhart & Pedersen, 2004, Chard, MacLean, & Faught, 2013a; Chard, Hyatt, & Foster, 2013b; Chard & Potwarka, 2017 it is important for Athletic Directors to also be cognisant of external constituents as well (Inglis, 1991; Armstrong-Doherty, 1995). Being able to work in a harmonious relationship with other members of their staff, department, and institution is essential, while fostering external collaboration in the form of OUA/U SPORTS knowledge transfer, corporate support, revenue generation, etc.

Related to executing day-to-day tasks, Athletic Directors discussed their current behaviours as involving collaboration with a variety of internal members institution wide, versus the collaborative dynamic in the past. For example, while Athletic Directors viewed managing teams, coaches, and staff as fundamental, extending invitations to other working groups (e.g., Student Associations, Security) to work with the department was critical for their overall performance. Such collaboration has provided the Athletic Director with new insight, knowledge, and production that has the potential to positively influence performance for the institution felt by a majority of Athletic Directors spoken to.

More externally focused, collaboration with members of the external environment including the inter-university governing association, OUA, and the national governing body, U SPORTS was determined as integral. Some Athletic Directors view collaboration

as an opportunity for the league to become stronger if it becomes fundamental to their league values. Interestingly, a conversation ensued between the researcher and Athletic Directors, highlighting how collaboration among institutions is actually seldom utilized within the OUA. It appears that Athletic Directors keep their knowledge close to their chests, given something they might know may provide other coaches, teams, department and institution a step above the rest.

Financial Management

Considering the substantial operating revenue and expenses with which Canadian athletic and recreation departments operate, it is imperative that leaders who oversee these departments possess the necessary core competencies in order to manage them effectively. While shown to be of the utmost importance, numerous scholars, (Danychuk & Chelladurai, 1999; Danylchuk & MacLean, 2001; Smart & Wolfe, 2000; Whisenhart & Pedersen, 2004, Chard, MacLean, & Faught, 2013a; Chard, Hyatt, & Foster, 2013; Chard & Potwarka, 2017) emphasize the importance of financial competence in the Canadian university setting. The "spectrum of variability" between Canadian institutions that include facilities, operating budgets, and sport offerings are funded in different ways (Danylchuk & MacLean, 2001). While every university possesses unique characteristics, those occupying the Athletic Director position have a fundamental responsibility to care for their department's financial needs. This responsibility therefore, requires that Athletic Directors share a confidence in their ability to give all their constituents the resources they require. As such, regardless of

differences/uniqueness of institutions, financial management is a primary, requisite core competency area within Canada.

More specifically, Athletic Directors spoke to their understanding around *budgeting*, where managing monetary funds enables them to determine priorities within their own departments and make decisions as to where and to whom to distribute funds. Research conducted by Danylchuk and Chelladurai (1999), which valued *financial management* as the administrator's highest importance managerial activity, has been supported by findings in this study. As financial resources are scarce and remain a "critical issue" in inter-university athletics in Canada (Danylchuk & MacLean, 2001, p. 372), Athletic Directors must proactively budget for the sustainability of the programs they support.

Related directly to the competency of budgeting was the Athletic Directors' *accountability* with regard to student ancillary fees that must be coherently communicated to the higher institution and to the students who provide them. A significant portion (if not all) of the resources with which these departments operate are collected from students who attend the institution. Therefore, the Athletic Director's responsibility to effectively state where this money is being spent is vital (Hardin, Cooper, & Huffman, 2013). Based on findings, Athletic Directors not only have to account for where funds are being spent, but must also divide those funds across the constituents that make up their department.

The example outlined by AD #8, highlighting the different resource requirements of Men's and Women's hockey, is just one of many whereby the Athletic Director must

allocate resources efficiently. Given the ongoing need for more dollars, Athletic Directors must critically assess the costs of operating these programs and the value they bring. For example, providing opportunities for more student-athletes and more teams could mean depleted resources for other aspects that may diminish recreational programming that serve many non-varsity athletes.

The ever-increasing requirement to generate revenue for their departments has resulted in the critical need for Athletic Directors to possess strong financial acumen as a core competency. While financial restraints continue to be placed on these departments including: government cutbacks and tuition fee increases (Danylchuk & Chelladurai, 1999; Danylchuk & MacLean, 2001), Athletic Directors have described their need to implement new revenue streams that can keep their student-athletes and programming sustainable. As these programs have sought sources of revenue that include corporate sponsorship and alumni donations, additional influence (Inglis, 1991) will have to be managed effectively within these athletic departments. Discussion has centred on the influence the Athletic Director possesses within the dynamic of the higher institution (Armstrong-Doherty, 1995); however, based upon the core competencies discussed in this study, this discussion could be updated. While Inglis (1991) emphasizes that corporate sponsors should have very little influence over athletic departments in Canada, their impact through sponsorship could alleviate some resource deficiencies. One must now call into question the influence they could garner considering the increasing need of these departments to seek out new revenue sources.

A key component of revenue generation, the Athletic Director's ability to fundraise is a competency that cannot be overlooked in today's competitive environment. The pursuit of profitable relationships that could benefit the departments within which Athletic Directors work is fundamental to performance and sustainability in the future. Athletic Directors described their need to foster relationships including representing the department across a variety of initiatives and events that could be of benefit. Discussed more within their knowledge of marketing, the Athletic Directors' competencies in representing as figureheads and ambassadors has shown direct correlation to soliciting donations or resources that help today's students who attend those institutions in this study. Described as time consuming and difficult, Athletic Directors who are able to actively fundraise effectively impact the bottom line for their departments.

With this being said, the researcher still questions the lower profile of inter-university sport programs in Canada, and the control the institution still has related over the athletic and recreation departments. Based upon the updated understanding of competencies, the life or death of the department is at the mercy of central administration and the competencies discussed will allow Athletic Directors to positively develop/sustain the pressures, as outlined in previous literature (Armstrong-Doherty, 1995; Danylchuk & MacLean, 2001; Aughey, Danylchuk & Lebel, 2011; Chard, MacLean, & Faught, 2013a; Chard, Hyatt, & Foster, 2013b; Chard & Potwarka, 2017).

Marketing Management

From the findings, the Athletic Directors' ability to promote their athletic and recreation departments can also significantly influence the competitive advantage among institutions. With increased competition for students, the importance of these departments will continue to be embraced with both a goal of excellence within the varsity component and a strong focus on the participant and non-profit oriented programming (Danylchuk & MacLean, 2001). A central focus of how students, faculty and the community come to know the university is through this department. Therefore, it is apparent that a considerable amount of resources (i.e., human and fiscal) have to be invested in marketing initiatives to compete (Chard et al., 2013a)

As Athletic Directors mentioned the substantial opportunity they have to promote the institution, they must be cognisant of how their brand is perceived to a variety of stakeholders. In this case, their knowledge of *brand management* is necessary to maintain a strong position in the eyes of current students, faculty and those who may be interested in their institution's academic, social, athletic/recreation programming. For example, according to Chard et al., (2013) the process, in which administrators present the university and athletic department to potential students, may impact their perceptions and could influence their desire to attend a specific university. As shown throughout the research, Athletic Directors manage at the strategic level and maintain control of tasks executed by their departments' staff, and maintain a strong belief in how proper brand management can elicit a competitive advantage.

As institutions are situated within communities and cities across the country, the Athletic Director must understand the social characteristics that make up the institution's geographical location. Through this research, an updated understanding of the Athletic Director's strength in *Community/Philanthropic relations* has been reached as integral to their role, by the Athletic Directors interviewed and as supported by scholars Hatfield, Wrenn and Bretting, (1987) and Whisenhart and Pedersen, (2004). While Danylchuk and Chelladurai's (1999) research did not include this activity as important, they identified the Athletic Director's ability to be a Figurehead/Ambassador and facilitating Public Relations would assist these community interactions. Using their resources to effectively influence positive change in the community could showcase their department's competitive advantage beyond the campus.

The multitude of responsibilities the Athletic Director has does not end at strategic management, moreover as an ambassador for the department, they are continually requested or invited to attend additional events and meetings that represents an ever-increasing demand (Danylchuk & Chelladurai, 1999; Whisenhart & Pedersen, 2004). As Danylchuk and Chelladurai (1999) placed being a "figurehead" as of mid-level importance in their study, in the current research, this core managerial competency seems to have increased and represents a key factor in promoting the institution and the athletic and recreation departments. Being able to lead by example and represent the brand is seen as a critical part of the role of the Athletic Director. Their ability to confidently represent their departments and institution in the public realm is essential, given the implications of the competitive advantage for whom they represent.

Current findings also indicated areas of the Athletic Directors' competencies that are more competitive in nature. Those Athletic Directors who indicated the importance of knowledge within *Recruitment* and *Digital Communication* may be leaders in shaping what inter-university athletics develops into the future. Following with their "front porch" mindset was a heightened level of awareness of what it takes to recruit athletes. Both Athletic Directors themselves and the literature (Danychuk and MacLean (2001) point toward the notion that enrolment in post-secondary education is decreasing. Leaders like the Athletic Director must see this challenge as an opportunity to use what their department offers to their advantage. Following Chard et al., (2013a), Athletic Directors must place great attention on the importance of recruitment. Thus, the required competencies to market the department (i.e., through Brand Management, Community/Philanthropic Relations) are integral. The Athletic Directors' ongoing understanding of what current and future/prospective student-athletes are interested in needs to be continually explored.

Based upon the advancement of marketing technology, Athletic Directors have seen a significant shift forward in their need to be knowledgeable, if not competent in *Digital Communication*. Their competency in this medium must be at least strong enough to understand and delegate in order to swiftly share and promote what the athletic and recreation departments are doing. As platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, among others continue to develop, department staff and Athletic Directors must be up to date with relevant knowledge in order to utilize these marketing tools. What is interesting is that this particular competency in strategizing is a new ability that

was obviously not shown to be of importance decades ago, yet builds upon the ever-changing environment within the sporting industry.

As a more creative outlet to showcase their departments, Athletic Directors discuss how the ability to effectively utilize all social media platforms is valuable to their department and their institution. Use of digital communication also provides departmental employees with an efficient outlet to share more of the experiences and stories they otherwise might not have had a chance to as frequently before. Noting that the Athletic Director is likely not the one who is directly using social media (i.e., posting messages), it is critical he or she understands the importance of what it provides to their overall potential competitive advantage.

CHAPTER VI: Conclusion

Implications for the industry and academia

The intended purpose of this research has been to understand the core competencies needed of OUA athletic directors to best perform in their role within inter-university athletics in Canada. As the Athletic Directors have provided the most robust perspective of the job they occupy, this researcher gained a great amount of value from their interviews with this group of leaders. While the researcher held an initial assumption that these participants might inflate value placed on required competencies, this did not seem to hold true within the interviews or in these data. The Athletic Directors were open, honest, and transparent while describing the core competencies they perceived as relevant to their role.

From a managerial or practitioner perspective, this research has several implications. First, Athletic Directors can seek to better understand what their colleagues have shared within these collected data. Upon review of these research data, these individuals will have a better sense of potential gaps in competency. Therefore, a sense of "knowledge transfer" or collaboration has been implicitly presented for all those athletic administrators interested in learning more about what their Athletic Director colleagues are involved in. As well, the model could be used as a starting point for evaluation of Athletic Directors and their staff to determine whether what they are hired to do is actually executed upon. It is important to keep in mind however, this study was meant to update our understanding rather than for evaluation purposes.

Further, the findings of this research may assist Human Resource Management departments within different institutions, in better outlining tailored job description for the position of Athletic Director. Utilizing the research findings accordingly could provide positive adjustments to standards in the hiring process within athletic administration in Canada. An improved understanding of actual roles and responsibilities and the key competencies required of key members of athletic and recreation departments, based on updated research, could lead to better allocation of resources and efficiency (i.e. Selection/Training of staff). Offering a more insightful job posting or advertisement with a discerning expectation of candidate core competencies may lead to greater potential performance of one of the critical human capital resources within an athletic department. Through the research findings, it became clear that several changes and updated competencies were required for those working in athletic administration, in comparison to the role and responsibilities in years past for example (Empowerment, Digital Communication, Recruitment).

For those interested in pursuing careers within inter-university sport in Canada, the research findings, and OUA Athletic Director model highlights the core competencies, now perceived as relevant. From these competencies, individuals may seek out opportunities and experiences that may better equip them to pursue and succeed with the work being done within inter-university athletics. Further, the researcher postulates that this research may influence post-secondary programs and course selection if students are strategic with how and where they would like to attain a position in athletic administration.

From the standpoint of the inter-university athletic governing bodies; (OUA and U SPORTS), this knowledge could be transferred into direct action. For example, Athletic Directors described how greater opportunities to collaborate would significantly impact the betterment of their own departments, sports, and associations. All members must be able to understand the overall principles of inter-university athletics at the post-secondary level. Even though these Athletic Directors may guard competencies (i.e. skills, knowledge, abilities) close to their departments in order to gain potential advantage, they must be able to come together and share best practices for the overall success of both the OUA and U SPORTS, adopting a model of being competitive related to the surface of play while being collaborative related to administrative or managerial realms.

From a scholarly perspective, this research will contribute to sport management literature. Building on a variety of research presented earlier in the literature review, this study fills a void of research on Canadian inter-university administration, in that the researcher provides updated depth, consideration for evolution of practices, and clarity to the competency profile for a specific position within an organization. Rather than eliciting data from surveys or questionnaires (Cash, 1983; Williams & Miller, 1983; Parker, 1986; Hatfield et al., 1987; Neilson, 1989; Quarterman, 1994; Danylchuk and Chelladurai, 1999; Chard et al., 2013; Chard & Potwarka, 2017), the researcher garnered a considerable amount of qualitative data from semi-structured interviews instead.

Again, based on previous knowledge of athletic administration as understood through quantitative research methodology, (Cash, 1983; Williams & Miller, 1983;

Parker, 1986; Hatfield et al., 1987; Neilson, 1989; Quarterman, 1994; Danylchuk and Chelladurai, 1999; Smart & Wolfe, 2000; Won et al., 2012; Hardin et al., 2013), this particular study builds upon the existing literature and strengthens the Canadian inter-university managerial context following qualitative research methodology. While previous studies offered excellent concrete findings, the significance of this study showcased why conducting qualitative research provided more rich data for the specific purpose of this research.

From the perspective of the researcher, Figure 5, The OUA Athletic Director Competency Model, contributes to sport management research. Gangani, McLean, and Braden (2006) have also asserted that the use of competency models improves human resource management strategy such that "by applying a systematic framework to evaluate employee competencies, an organization may be able to build an ongoing snapshot of the overall knowledge and skills portfolio of its workforce" (p. 127). In line with what scholars have discussed, competency based analysis provided an exceptional opportunity to update an understanding of the requirement of a specific role (Athletic Director) within a specific organizational context (Canadian inter-university athletics) to be effective.

Limitations

In conducting the study, the research can report on some limitations. As Athletic Directors are obviously the leader within the athletic and recreation departments, their perceptions might be biased, therefore, internal and external members to the department including department staff, Student-Athletes, Faculty, OUA and U SPORTS administration could have the potential to provide even more robust data around relevant

core competencies from their various perspectives. For example, Athletic Directors mentioned their required competency to allocate resources efficiently for their departments' programs. Coaches could also indicate through interviews and analysis, that their Athletics Directors are constantly assisting their programs with monetary resources and equipment, among other resources for sustainable performance year after year, thereby providing an additional level of confirmation for the required competency of resource allocation.

Limitations that arose during the research process included the process of ethics approval, and the opportunity to interview face-to-face, which could have contributed to additional non-verbal data observed by the researcher. While a majority of the interviews were conducted over the phone and via the teleconferencing application, Skype, face-to-face connection with the Athletic Directors was limited. Making use of this time was of high priority and the researcher believes if he had been able to travel to these institutions he may have had the opportunity for further observations leading to a greater understanding of their role.

This study lacks generalizability beyond the scope of the OUA. Although the researcher was interested in providing a competency model that could be generalized across U SPORTS and the 56 Athletic Directors, further research is needed for greater understanding. Although the researcher does not believe this limited the findings in any way, it must be acknowledged that had more time and resources been available, the scope of the study could have been extrapolated across the country. The researcher believes the creation of the OUA Athletic Director Competency Model (see page 46) represents a

sufficient and significant update that could help to inform future research endeavours. Based on the findings and limitations of the current study, an opportunity presents itself for future research.

Future Research

As the Canadian context has only been studied on occasion over the past thirty years, this is an exceptional opportunity for those passionate about inter-university athletics to provide insight on an industry of sport not yet fully explored in Canada. Previous literature surrounding U SPORTS has only scratched the surface of what could be understood. Future studies could begin by continuing to explore competencies required for human resources in athletic and recreation departments. For example, a possible question that may guide research could include "how would the perception of other key stakeholders within the department and institution perceive the necessary core competencies of the Athletic Director's role?"

Opportunities are also available for research to compare and contrast these current findings across the four U SPORTS governing associations, U SPORTS versus the Canadian College Athletic Association (CCAA), and U SPORTS versus the NCAA. A more specific study could explore how U SPORTS governance and their resources fit within the differences of the NCAA and their three respective divisions. As well, of genuine interest to the researcher, was how previous roles and experiences of key members of these departments had progressed to the positions they hold today. All things considered, the opportunity to advance the knowledge in inter-university athletics here in Canada is ripe for advancement.

Final Thoughts

Given the position of Athletic Director comes with multiple responsibilities, it is essential that continued analysis and reporting of the competencies these specific individuals require to succeed be conducted. Of course, while not all aspects of the athletic department's resources may be relevant, this research indicates an opportunity to explore a tangible (Caves, 1980), and human capital (Barney, 1991) resource. With a heightened focus on the Athletic Director as a Human Capital resource, similar factors resonate to the core competencies found in this research. For example, *Training* is the skills learned on the job; *Experience* is previous and current experiences that have helped them in their current position; *Judgement* is the decision-making authority that these individuals have; *Intelligence* resonates to the awareness of competencies they all share; *Relationships* are those human resource management abilities, while *insight* resonates to the strategic oversight and management Athletic Directors possess (Barney, 1991). Where this research advances knowledge pertains to the specific nature of the role of the Athletic Director within Canada, managerial activities and competencies, competency-based analysis and more broadly within the theory of the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm.

In conclusion, the primary objective of the research has been to understand the core competencies needed of OUA athletic directors to best perform in their role within inter-university athletics in Canada. The purpose of updating competencies will assist those already working within the role to effectively manage towards a greater competitive advantage for their departments. This iterative process to provide updated accounts of

competencies deemed relevant based on the perceptions of those who work in those specific roles will be important in the years to come. Also providing a platform for future research to continue to explore inter-university athletics beyond the NCAA focus, and use sport more broadly to uncover knowledge of competitive advantage in not-for-profit organizations.

References

Armstrong-Doherty, A. J. (1995). Athletic Directors' Perceptions of Environmental Control Over Inter-university Athletics. *Sociology Of Sport Journal*, *12*(1), 75.

Amis, J., Pant, N., & Slack, T. (1997). Achieving a sustainable competitive advantage: A resource-based view of sport sponsorship. *Journal of Sport Management*, *11*, 80–96.

Barney, J. (1986). Organizational culture: Can it be a sustained competitive advantage? *Academy of Management Review*, *11*, 656–665.

Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, *17*(1), 99–120.

Barney, J., Wright, M., & Ketchen, D. J. (2001). The resource-based view of the firm: Ten years after 1991. *Journal of Management*, *27*(6), 625–641.

Becker, G. S. (1964*). Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*. New York: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Berman, S., Down, J., & Hill, C. (2002). Tacit knowledge as a source of competitive advantage in the National Basketball Association. *Academy of Management Journal*, *45*, 13–31.

Bernthal, P. R., Colteryahn, K., Davis, P., Naughton, J., Rothwell, W. J., & Wellins, R. (2004). *Mapping the future: Shaping new workplace learning and performance competencies*. American Society for Training and Development. Retrieved from https://books.google.ca/books?id=az1p3vVpaQYC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Boyatzis, R. (1982). *The competent manager: A model for effective performance*. New York: Wiley.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2). 77-101. ISSN 1478-0887

Bretting, M. (1983). A sports management personnel competency inventory model (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (UMI No. 8402538).

Brock University. 2015–2016 Budget Report. Retrieved from https://brocku.ca/webfm_send/36018.

Brock University Faculty Association. (2014). *Things to think about before you (or your department or centre) sign on the dotted online learning line*. Retrieved from https://bufa.ca/things-to-think-about-before-you-or-your-department-or-centre-sign-on-the-dotted-online-learning-line/.

Caelli, K., Ray, L., & Mill, J. (2003). 'Clear as mud': Toward greater clarity in generic qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *2*(2), 1–13.

Canadian Inter-university Sport. (2013). *CIS university sport strategic plan 2012–2018*. Retrieved from http://english.cis-sic.ca/stratplan/strategic_plan-Finale-En.pdf.

Carlson, S. (1951). *Executive behaviour: A study of the workload and working methods of managing directors*. Stockholm: Strombergs.

Caves, R. (1980). Industrial organization, corporate strategy and structure. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *58*, 64–92.

Chard, C. (2013). Understanding the brand meaning of the Canadian Inter-university Sport hockey league: An insurance policy if all else fails! *Sport in Society, 16*(3), 327–339. doi:10.1080/17430437.2013.779853

Chard, C., MacLean, J., & Faught, B. (2013a). Managing athletic department touch points: A case study of one institution using importance-performance analysis. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport, 6*(2), 196–212. doi:10.1123/jis.6.2.196

Chard, C.R., Hyatt, C., & Foster, W.M. (2013b). Assets and obstacles: An analysis of OUA hockey from the coaches' perspective. *Sport, Business and Management*. *International Journal (Toronto, Ont.), 3*(3), 246–259.

Chard, C., Potwarka, L. (2017). Exploring the Relative Importance of Factors That Influence Student-Athletes; School-Choice Decisions: A Case Study of One Canadian University. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*. 10, 22-43.

Christian, H. R. (2000). Leadership styles and characteristics of athletic directors (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (UMI No. 9989252).

Collins, J. C. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap—and others don't*. New York, NY: HarperBusiness.

Cooper, S., & Endacott, R. (2007). Generic qualitative research: A design for qualitative research in emergency care? *Emergency Medicine Journal*, *24*(12), 816–819.

Daft, R. (1983). *Organization theory and design*. New York, NY: West.

Danylchuk, K. E., & Chelladurai, P. (1999). The nature of managerial work in Canadian Intercollegiate Athletics. *Journal of Sport Management*, *13*(2), 148–166.

Danylchuk, K. E., & MacLean, J. (2001). Intercollegiate athletics in Canadian universities: Perspectives on the future. *Journal of Sport Management*, *15*(4), 364–379.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fletcher, S. (1991). *NVQs, standards and competence: A practical guide for employers, managers and trainer*. London: Kogan Page.

Gangani, N., McLean, G., & Braden, R. (2006). A competency-based human resource development strategy. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, *19*(1), 127–139.

Geiger, N. M. (2013). Intercollegiate Athletics in Canada and the United States: Differences in Access, Quality, and Funding. *College Quarterly*, *16*(3),

Gerrad, B. (2003). What does the resource-based view "bring to the table" in sport management research? *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *3*, 139–144.

Guion, R. (1991). *Personnel assessment, selection and placement*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Hambrick, D. (1987). The top management team: Key to strategic success. *California Management Review*, *30*(1), 88–108.

Hardin, R., Cooper, C. G., & Huffman, L. T. (2013). Moving on Up. *Journal Of Applied Sport Management*, *5*(3), 55.

Hatfield, B., Wrenn, J., & Bretting, M. (1987). Comparison of job responsibilities of intercollegiate athletic directors and professional sport general managers. *Journal of Sport Management*, *1*(2), 129–145.

Horton, S. (2000). Introduction – the competency movement: Its origins and impact on the public sector. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, *13*(4), 306–318.

Horton, S. (2002). The competency movement. In S. Horton, A. Hondeghem, & D. Farnham (Eds.), *Competency management in the public sector: European variations on a theme* (pp. 3–15). Amsterdam: IOS Press. Retrieved from https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=zRWcRAApWL8C&oi=fnd&pg=PA3&dq=Horton,+2002+competency&ots=ze_0WKGsTx&sig=4HSwCgl_rfN4dgm2iUQgJHqAsEU#v=onepage&q=Horton%2C%202002%20competency&f=false

Inglis, S. (1991). Influence In and Around Inter-university Athletics. *Journal Of Sport Management*, *5*(1), 18-33.

Judd, M. R. (1995). A gender comparison of competencies important for success in college athletic administration. *Physical Educator*, 52, 8–13.

Klein, B., Crawford, R., & Alchian, A. (1978). Vertical integration, appropriable rents, and the competitive contracting process. *Journal of Law & Economics*, *21*(2), 297–326.

Klein, B., & Leffler, K. (1981). The role of market forces in assuring contractual performance. *Journal of Political Economy*, *89*(4), 615–641.

Lambrecht, K. W. (1987). An analysis of the competencies of sports and athletic club managers. *Journal of Sport Management*, *1*(2), 116–128.

Leon, A. C., Davis, L. L., & Kraemer, H. C. (2011). The role and interpretation of pilot studies in clinical research. *Journal Of Psychiatric Research*, (5), 626.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lucia, A. D., & Lepsinger, R. (1999). The art and science of competency models: Pin pointing critical success factors in an organization. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfiefer.

McClelland, D. (1973). Testing for competence rather than intelligence. *The American Psychologist*, *2*(4), 1–20.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). Qualitative research and case study applications in education. Revised and expanded from Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA.

Miller, P. S., & Kerr, G. (2002). The athletic, academic and social experiences of intercollegiate student-athletes. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, *25*(4), 346.

Mintzberg, H. (1990). The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact. *Harvard Business Review,* 12–20.

Mintzberg, H. (1994). Rounding out the manager's job. *Sloan Management Review*, *1*, 11–26.

Mirabile, R. J. (1997, August). Everything you wanted to know about competency modeling. *Training & Development*, *51*(8). Retrieved from http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA20021823&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&u=st46245&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=4c6b43844778d3fc77303a85179dbfb2

Misun, J. (2013). Competency model as a tool of valuation of management capability. Published in 9th EBES Conference Proceedings - Rome, Italy: January, 11–13, 2013, 1047–1061.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (2016). What is the NCAA? Retrieved from

http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/ncaa-101/what-ncaa

Neergaard, M. A., Olesen, F., Andersen, R. S., & Sondergaard, J. (2009). Qualitative description – The poor cousin of health research? *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *9*(52), 1-5. DOI: 10.1186/1471-2288-9-52

Nielsen, F. E. (1989). A competency analysis of NCAA athletic administrators (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (UMI No. 9019192).

Ontario University Athletics. (August, 18th, 2014). *2014–2020 OUA strategic plan*. MRSB Consulting Services. Retrieved from http://static.psbin.com/v/5/p48el8n4zlprph/2014-2020_Ontario_University_Athletics_Strategic_Plan.pdf

Parker, W. K. (1986). *The managerial roles of NCAA division 1 athletic directors with implications for future training* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville).

Parkhouse, B. L. (1978). Professional preparation in athletic administration and sport management: Graduate programs in the United States. *Journal of Physical Education and Recreation*, *49*(5), 22–27.

Peteraf, M. A. (1993). The cornerstones of competitive advantage: a resource‐based view. *Strategic Management Journal*, *14*(3), 179-191.

Porter, M. E. (1980). Competitive strategy: Techniques for analyzing industries and competitors. New York: Free Press.

Quarterman, J. (1994). Managerial Role Profiles of Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Commissioners. *Journal Of Sport Management*, *8*(2), 129-139.

Rorty, R. (1979). *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rothwell, W., & Lindholm, J. (1999). Competency identification, modelling and assessment in the USA. *International Journal of Training and Development*, *3*, 90–105.

Sandberg, J. (2000). Understanding human competence at work: An interpretative approach. *Academy of Management Journal*, *43*(1), 9–25.

Sandelowski, M. (2000). Focus on research methods: Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing & Health*, *23*, 334–340.

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. (2013). *Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and practice*. New York: Routledge.

Schneider, R. C., & Stier Jr., W. F. (2004). Areas of knowledge necessary for successful athletic directors: a descriptive survey of the perceptions of NCAA institution presidents. *Missouri Journal Of Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, *14*74-82.

Scott, J. (1990). *A matter of record: Documentary sources in social research*. Cambridge: Polity.

Skipper, W. (1990). Competencies for collegiate sports facility managers: Implications for a facility management curricular model (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (UMI No. 9111252).

Smart, D., & Wolfe, R. (2000). Examining sustainable competitive advantage in intercollegiate athletics: A resource-based view. *Journal of Sport Management*, *14*, 133–153.

Solomon, J. (2015, December). Inside college sports: SEC, big ten dominate $100M revenue club. CBS Sports. Retrieved from http://www.cbssports.com/collegefootball/writer/jon-solomon/25417211/inside-college-sports-sec-big-ten-dominate-100m-revenue-club

Spencer, L., and Spencer, S. (1993). *Competence at work: A model for superior performance*. New York: Wiley.

Strebler, M., Robinson, D., Heron, P. (1997). *Getting the best out of your competencies*. IES Report 334. Retrieved from http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/334.pdf

Toh, K. L. (1997). Constructing and validating competencies of sport managers (COSM) instrument: A model development (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (UMI No. 9825482).

Tomer, J. F. (1987). *Organizational capital: The path to higher productivity and well being*. New York: Praeger.

Turner, D. W. (2010). Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators.*The Qualitative Report*, *15*(3), 754-760. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol15/iss3/19

Tracy, S. J. (2012). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. [Electronic resource], Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. Retrieved fromhttps://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=KAzBiMCS6uwC&oi=fnd&pg=PT14&dq=Tracy,+S.+J.+(2012).+Qualitative+research+methods:+Collecting+evidence,+crafting+analysis,+communicating+impact.+%5BElectronic+resource

%5D+Hoboken,+NJ:+Wiley.&ots=IcH2MALTZA&sig=K90Pl63QnSbwIGwqumVIaI24QSI#v=onepage&q&f=false

Ulrich, D., & Parkhouse, B. (1982). An alumni oriented approach to sport management curriculum design using performance ratings and a regression model. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *53*, 64–72.

Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative research interviewing: Biographic narrative and semi-structured method*. London: Sage.

Wernerfelt, B. (1984). A resource-based view of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, *5*(2), 171–180.

Whisenant, W. A., & Pedersen, P. M. (2004). The influence of managerial activities on the success of intercollegiate athletic directors. *American Business Review*, *22*(1), 21-26.

Williams, J., & Miller, D. (1983). Intercollegiate athletic administration: Preparation patterns. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *54*, 398–406.

Williamson, O. (1975). *Markets and hierarchies*. New York: Free Press.

Won, D., Bravo, G., & Lee, C. (2013). Careers in collegiate athletic administration: hiring criteria and skills needed for success. *Managing Leisure*, *18*(1), 71-91

Wong, G. (June, 2014). The path to the athletic director's office. *Sport Business Journal*, *17*(9), 32–33.

Youngberg, R. (1971). A comparative analysis of the qualifications suggested for a successful intercollegiate athletic director (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (UMI No. 7209740

Appendix A
BROCK UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF SPORT MANAGEMENT
LETTER OF INVITATION

October, 2016

Title of Study: From the Desk of the Canadian Athletic Director: Perceptions of Core Competencies in Ontario University Athletics (OUA)

Principal Investigator: Dr. Chris Chard, Professor, Department of Sport Management, Brock University
Student Principal Investigator: Tyler Harrison, Graduate Student, Department of Sport Management, Brock University

Dear [Name]

I, Tyler Harrison, a graduate student from the Department of Sport Management at Brock University, would like to invite you to participate in my research project entitled "From the Desk of the Canadian Athletic Director: Perceptions of Core Competencies in Ontario University Athletics (OUA)"

The purpose of this research will be to understand/explore an ADs core competencies required to effectively perform managerial activities of inter-university athletics in Canada. As the majority of literature has focused on the National Collegiate Athletic Association, fine-tuning the relevant competencies necessary for athletic directors within the CIS context and providing qualitative research is an opportunity for further study.

In order to complete this study, I would ideally like all of the athletic directors within the Ontario University Athletic conference to participate in one-on-one interviews. Should you wish to participate, this interview would take place in-person and can take place in the location of your choosing. Should distance limit this opportunity, I am happy to conduct interviews over the phone or Skype. The interview would be audio recorded and transcribed upon completion. The anticipated interview length would be one hour.

Given the paucity of research around strategic management of athletic departments in Canada, this research would update what has already been researched to an extent within the United States (NCAA). I believe gaining this robust data will be a step forward in further learning about the position of athletic director. As well, this new knowledge can be used as a pedagogical tool to train those students who are interested in a career in athletic administration. This knowledge will inform readers of the competencies required to flourish in this field.

This research is funded solely through the Brock University graduate student program and is a single-site project.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Brock University Research Ethics Office (905 688-5550 ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca). Please note that participation in this research is voluntary, and those who are interested or have questions should feel free to contact me or my faculty supervisor using the contact information listed below.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and assistance with this study.

Tyler Harrison

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Chris Chard
Associate Professor, Department of Sport Management
Brock University
(905) 688-5550 x 5875 / cchard@brocku.ca

Principal Student Investigator (PSI): Tyler Harrison
Graduate Student, Department of Sport Management
Brock University
(416) 277-9293 / th10an@brocku.ca

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's Research Ethics Board (File 16-023)

Appendix B
BROCK UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF SPORT MANAGEMENT
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Date: September 2016
Project Title: From the Desk of the Canadian Athletic Director: Perceptions of Core Competencies in Ontario University Athletics (OUA)

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Chris Chard, Associate Professor
Department of Sport Management
Brock University
(905) 688-5550 x 5875 / cchard@brocku.ca

Principal Student Investigator (PSI): Tyler Harrison, Graduate Student
Department of Sport Management
Brock University
(416) 277-9293 / th10an@brocku.ca

INVITATION
You are invited to be in a research study exploring the core competencies required to be an Athletic Director (AD) in the CIS. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study. As well, prior to the interview beginning, consent must be obtained via this informed consent form and sent to the Principal Student Investigator (Tyler Harrison) email (listed above) or submitted in-person.

The purpose of this research will be to understand/explore an ADs core competencies required to effectively perform managerial activities of inter-university athletics in Canada.

As the majority of academic literature has focused on the National Collegiate Athletic Association, fine-tuning the relevant competencies necessary for athletic directors within the CIS context and providing qualitative research is an opportunity for further study. The research questions to be explored within this study are the following:

i. What are the relevant core competencies an OUA Athletic Director requires to effectively perform in his or her position?
ii. How has previous experience helped OUA Athletic Director's in the job role?
iii. How does a typical job advertisement for the AD (as posted for hiring) compare to the AD's actual work (i.e., over a daily, monthly, annually basis)?

WHAT'S INVOLVED
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following: 1) participate in an audio-recorded personal face-to-face, telephone, or Skype interview with me that will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Questions will entail asking you about what you believe you are required to be competent in your role as an athletic administrator. As well, I will provide time for you to further explain or share any information you feel is relevant to our discussion. The audio-recorded interview will be transcribed verbatim.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. As a participant in this study, you will receive no compensation for your participation. However, the information you provide to the study will assist inter-university athletic administration to improve strategic management practices and update the discussion around competency-based analysis. Potential participants may feel obligated to participate because their colleagues have chosen to participate in the study. As well, previous working relationships may contribute to participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Once the interviews have been conducted, the transcripts are a source of data that will be handled carefully. It will be important that the researcher cares for this material with the utmost respect due to its confidential nature. Participant's names and institutions will be assigned pseudonyms for publication and never disclosed in future written or oral presentations. The information you provide will be considered confidential and the PSI and Faculty Supervisor will be the only individuals who have access to the data. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used.

In order to provide protection for these valuable data sources, one audio file will remain on a password-protected computer of the Principal Student Investigator for clarification purposes during the transcription process. As well, a copy of each interview will be transferred to an external data storage device and secured at the researcher's home. This will protect the data, given the researcher is the only one who knows the password to the aforementioned computer, and will be the only person who knows where the external storage device will be housed. Upon completion of the study, the PSI will dispose of the audio files on all devices using the deletion function on the PSI's computer.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or to participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available through an executive summary produced by Tyler Harrison upon completion of the study. Please refer to contact information provided above.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Tyler Harrison and/or Dr. Chris Chard using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University **[16-023].** If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM
I agree to participate in this study as described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____
Date: _____

I consent to the use of my data for future studies around the phenomenon beyond thes described in the present consent.

Name: _____

Signature: _____
Date: _____

Appendix C
BROCK UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF SPORT MANAGEMENT
INTERVIEW GUIDE

General/ introductory questions:

- Can you please provide a brief description of what your job entails?
- How long have you been in this position?

Within the Canadian context of inter-university athletics, the athletic and recreation departments of 20 member institutions are made up of a myriad of resources. In an environment where broad institutional differences may permeate across every member in different ways, our understanding of how these institutions and their athletic departments operate should be explored. Beginning at the core, those individuals who are embedded within the specific CIS member institutions are at the front line of strategic management. Those who work within the department of athletics and recreation services may provide substantial value to their institution.

I'd like to ask you about the following four competency themes.

1. **Financial**

Regarding Financial Competencies, can you please describe how/or what you do in your duties as an Athletic Director?

PROBE: Budgeting, Alumni/Donation, Sustainability

2. **Marketing**

Regarding Marketing Competencies, can you please describe how/or what you do in your duties as an Athletic Director?

PROBE: Public Relations, Community Relations, Brand Management, Promotion, Recruitment, Social Media

3. **Experience**

Regarding your experience how has this assisted/deterred your work as an Athletic Director?

PROBE: Education, Coaching, Work /Business Acumen

4. **Leadership**

Regarding Leadership Competencies, can you please describe how/or what you do in your duties as an Athletic Director?

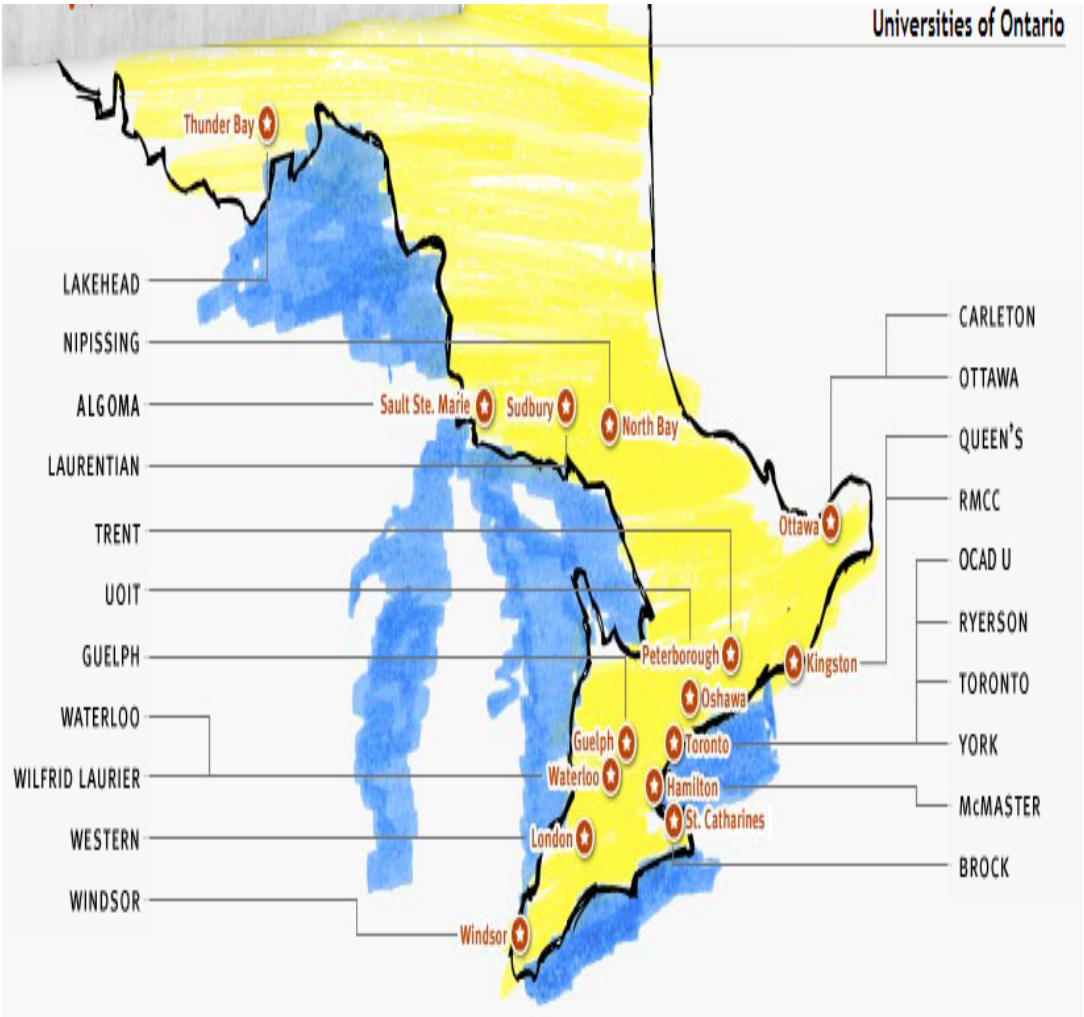
PROBE: Development, Human resource management (Staff, Coaches & Student-Athletes), Evaluation, Decision/policy making, Figurehead.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

For future individuals aspiring to work within athletic administration do you have any advice or take away messages?

Appendix D

Universities of Ontario (Brock University Faculty Association, 2014)



Appendix E

Research Ethics Board Application

Available electronically from the researcher upon request.